SORROW, HOPE AND PRAYER

A BOOK FOR MOURNERS

Dr. A. C. MORTIMER

243-6
F M844

THE GENERAL THEOLOGICAL
SEMINARY LIBRARY
CHELSEA SQUARE, NEW YORK II, N. Y.

The Gift of

Rev. Emmerson K. Hall.

SORROW, HOPE, AND PRAYER

By the REV. DR. A. G. MORTIMER.

Elegant Cloth, Price **3s. 6d.**

SEVENTH THOUSAND.

IT RINGETH TO EVENSONG;

Thoughts for Advancing Years.

The beautiful chapters in this Book are intended to form brief Readings or Meditations for those who are approaching, or have reached old age. It deals throughout, in a cheering spirit of consolation and help, alike with the difficulties, trials, and blessings of advancing years. Most suitable for an Autumn, Christmas, or New Year's Gift.

Among the contents are :—Visions and Dreams—The Years that the Locust hath Eaten—The Way to Meet our Trials—The Loss of Friends—The Loss of the Power to Work—The Loss of our Independence—The Loss or Impairment of Sight—Deafness. Also many chapters on the bright features of old age, *e.g.*, Patience ; Cheerfulness ; Kindness ; The Opportunities and Joys of Old Age ; Heavenly Mindedness ; The Realisation of God's Presence, etc., etc.

N.B.—An edition of this book, most HANDSOMELY BOUND in morocco, with rounded corners and gold over red edges, lettered in gold, forming a really beautiful Gift-book. Price **7s. 6d.** net.

SORROW, HOPE, AND PRAYER

A BOOK FOR MOURNERS

BY THE REV.
ALFRED G. MORTIMER, D.D.
RECTOR OF S. MARK'S, PHILADELPHIA
AUTHOR OF "THE CHURCH'S LESSONS FOR THE CHRISTIAN YEAR,"
"IT RINGETH TO EVENSONG—READINGS FOR THE AGED,"
"THE LAST DISCOURSES OF OUR LORD,"
"LENTEN PREACHING," ETC.

London
SKEFFINGTON & SON
34, SOUTHAMPTON STREET, STRAND, W.C.
PUBLISHERS TO HIS MAJESTY THE KING
1907

213.b
M844

152230

TO

H. C. P.

IN MEMORY OF A USEFUL LIFE

PREMATURELY CUT SHORT,

AND OF

A FRIENDSHIP CEMENTED BY A GREAT SORROW

THIS LITTLE BOOK IS DEDICATED.

Contents.

CHAPTER		PAGE
	PREFACE	ix.
I.	SUFFERING	1
II.	SORROW AND ITS CAUSES	14
III.	SORROW AS A REVELATION	28
IV.	THE VALUE OF SORROW	38
V.	THE EFFECTS OF SORROW	48
VI.	THE SORROW OF BEREAVEMENT	65
VII.	THE HOPE OF IMMORTALITY	75
VIII.	OUR CONDITION AFTER DEATH	85
IX.	THE HUMAN TRICHOTOMY	94
X.	THE PARTICULAR JUDGMENT	104
XI.	THE STATE OF PURIFICATION	114
XII.	THE TEACHING OF THE EARLY CHURCH IN REGARD TO PURIFICATION	124
XIII.	THE PROGRESS OF THE SOUL	138
XIV.	KNOWLEDGE AND RECOGNITION IN THE INTERMEDIATE STATE	147

Contents.

CHAPTER		PAGE
XV.	THE GOAL OF THE SOUL—HEAVEN	158
XVI.	THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS	170
XVII.	THE FELLOWSHIP OF PRAYER	175
XVIII.	EUCHARISTIC INTERCESSION	190
XIX.	ALMSGIVING	195
XX.	THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY	198

Preface.

So many books on the state of the soul after death have been put forth that some apology seems to be required for venturing to add to their number, and this it is hoped the following considerations will supply.

The Clergy are constantly called upon to recommend, to those in the sorrows of bereavement, something to read for the purpose of providing answers to several questions, which at such times become most insistent. These questions generally fall under three heads:

i. The purpose and effects of sorrow; for the mourner often asks, why should I have this crushing grief to bear? or how can I bear it so that it may fulfil God's purpose in me?

ii. The state of the faithful dead: what does revelation as interpreted by the Church tell us about them?

iii. The relation which still exists between us and those we have lost: what are the duties we owe them, and by what means can we help them?

With this need in view I have carefully examined a large number of books upon this subject. Many of these, in my judgment, could not be put into the hands of sorrowing friends and parishioners, because they contained speculations and statements concerning the condition of the faithful departed which were more or less unorthodox. Not a few others treated the subject so unsympathetically that while useful to a student of theology they were unsuited to bring comfort to mourners. Indeed, I found scarcely any that dealt with the purposes of sorrow *as well as* the state of the holy dead.

It is not, however, the clergy only who seek such books, but most people, probably, at some time, have friends or relations, grieving for the loss of those they love, to whom they desire to send some little book as a mark of their sympathy, and in the hope that it may minister to their consolation.

With some hesitation and at the suggestion of many friends, I have decided to make the attempt to provide, from the point of view of my own experience, something which should deal with the questions to which I have referred.

Having in mind the importance of supplying a book which can be freely given to those in sorrow, I have confined myself within the limits of a small volume, and, while teaching fully what the Church of all ages has authorised, I have endeavoured to avoid, as far as possible, a controversial tone. Those for whom it is written being for the most part

lay-people, I have striven to give a sympathetic and simple answer to many questions, which in times of bereavement press upon us, rather than to afford the theological treatment of them, which may be found in larger works.*

If this little book should help to allay doubts, to quicken hope, and to awaken more lively faith in the Communion of Saints, I shall be more than thankful.

A. G. M.

S. Mark's, Philadelphia,
Feast of S. James, 1907.

* *e.g.* "Catholic Faith and Practice," Vol. II. chapters xii.–xix Longman, Green & Co. (*by the same author*).

Sorrow, Hope, and Prayer.

CHAPTER I.

Suffering.

BEFORE we approach that aspect of suffering which forms the subject of this book—the sorrow of bereavement—it will be useful to consider the matter from a more general point of view.

When we study the world in which we live, a great mystery everywhere forces itself upon our notice, the mystery of suffering. We see it in the highest and the lowest, among the rich and the poor. Indeed, of all the various mysteries of life, that which is most universal (if, perhaps, we except sin) is suffering. Sin is a universal fact in the human life, but suffering is still wider reaching, since beneath its yoke not only man but all creation toils; for, as S. Paul says, "The whole creation [every creature] groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also."[1]

Suffering is both a fact of experience and a truth of revelation; for while experience tells us that few

[1] Rom. viii. 22, 23.

escape the discipline of suffering, revelation teaches us its cause, its purpose, and its ultimate result in eternity.

1. The cause of suffering is sin. But what is sin? S. John defines it as "the transgression of the law,"[1] or, to translate the original word more accurately, "lawlessness."[2] When we say that suffering is the result of sin, we are not merely stating a truth of revelation, but a fact of almost universal experience, since suffering may generally be traced to transgression of law, though not always on the part of the sufferer.

Suffering falls broadly into three spheres: Physical, mental, and moral, or pain of body, distress of mind, and anguish of soul; and in each the suffering is caused by disregard of law. The body of a perfectly healthy man is practically free from suffering. When pain manifests itself, it is a sign of the disregard or violation of some law of man's physical nature. Similarly distress of mind implies something out of harmony in man's life; and still more is this so in anguish of soul. We may observe the recognition of this principle by the provision in every community of three institutions to meet the needs of extreme cases of broken physical, mental, and moral laws; for we find everywhere hospitals, insane asylums, and prisons—hospitals to remedy, as far as human skill can, the result of broken laws in the sphere of man's physical being; insane asylums to deal with those

[1] 1 S. John iii. 4. [2] *ἀνομία*.

who are suffering mentally from the effects of the disregard of the laws which God has impressed upon man; and prisons, in which are restrained and punished those who have broken the laws of the State.

We have taken these three institutions as broadly illustrating the effects of lawlessness in the three parts of man's nature; but we must point out that in each the suffering is often vicarious in that the sufferer is the victim of the sins of others. The diseases of the body are frequently congenital, or the result of neglect in childhood, or of exposure to contagion, or of accident caused by another's carelessness. Still more often can insanity be traced back to ancestors and to certain forms of sin in which they indulged; while that moral evil which the State punishes is sometimes due to heredity or environment; that is, to the sins of parents or to the bad example of associates. In all these instances the sufferer is the victim of the sins of others, but none the less is the suffering ultimately traceable to sin, that is, to the transgression of law.

We must also draw attention to the fact that while the spheres of suffering are fairly separable into physical, mental, and moral, the different parts of man's nature so interlace that the causes of suffering cannot be restricted to the sphere in which it is found. For instance: mental suffering has frequently a purely physical cause, and insanity is traceable to the sins of the flesh, while distress of

mind often results in a nervous break-down or shows itself in the sphere of the body.

2. The purposes of suffering are manifold. To name but a few, we shall at once recognise that suffering in various ways is preventive, remedial, educational, sacramental, and sacrificial; that it has the power of developing strength of character, and of remedying the results of sin by bringing the sinner to penitence, and so effecting a moral restoration.

3. The end and final reward of suffering is glory. As S. Paul tells us, "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."[1] Indeed, it is not too much to say that without suffering it would be impossible for man to attain to that glory in eternity, which is the true end for which God created him. This point, however, requires fuller treatment, and will be considered in a chapter on the value of sorrow.

Not only is suffering the pathway to glory in the world beyond, but it is the only way of progress in our present life. It must be evident to everyone who studies the subject, that suffering plays a most important and most beneficent part in human life. In fact, pleasure and pain are the two guides of life. The first, acting as an incentive, moves man to those deeds, and urges him in those paths by which physical life is unfolded and developed; while the

[1] 2 Cor. iv. 17.

second, acting as a curb, restrains him from straying into paths of danger and destruction. Indeed, in physical life, pain is almost the only safeguard man has to prevent him from losing life itself in the pursuit of pleasure. We see this best, perhaps, in the matter of health, where pain, as sentinel, warns man of the beginnings of internal ailments, which, if not checked, might become fatal.

And, if we turn from the region of physical life to that of morals, we find here too that suffering plays a part which is even more important. For not only does it punish man for transgression of the moral law, and so warns him from forbidden paths of sin, but, when man has fallen into sin, moral suffering is the great factor in his restoration. The misery of remorse, the sting of conscience, is often the first beginning of that repentance by which the sinner regains not only his peace with God, but his own self-respect and self-mastery.

And further, after the moral nature has been weakened by indulgence in sin, the suffering which comes from the effort to resist returning temptation restores strength to the wounded part. Just as when a man breaks his arm, it is bound up in splints for some weeks until the bone knits; but when the splint is taken off, the arm at first is so weak as to be almost useless; the surgeon, however, comes and begins to work those muscles which have been weakened, in order gradually to bring back to them their strength; but as he exercises them, the pain is

often greater than it was at the first setting of the bone, and yet this painful process is necessary to restore to the weakened arm its power.

Similarly in the sphere of man's moral nature suffering is necessary, not only to warn him from the path of sin, but, after he has sinned, to bring him back to penitence, and still more, through the penance which the sin involves, to restore completely his weakened moral nature.

When we pass from the realm of morals to the higher domain of the spiritual life, we find that suffering, while fulfilling all the various functions which we have traced in the two lower spheres of physical and moral being, adds to them certain special powers.

In the spiritual sphere suffering becomes *sacramental*, that is, it is a means of uniting the soul to God; for in the furnace of affliction the soul, relying upon God's grace, and enduring chastisement as from the hands of a loving father, becomes, as it were, welded to God, and, thus united to Him, attains to that knowledge of the fellowship of the sufferings of Christ, for which S. Paul prays so earnestly.[1]

Another stage is reached when suffering becomes *sacrificial;* that is, when the soul, united to Christ, joyfully offers to God all its pains and sorrows in union with Christ's one Sacrifice upon the Cross. So S. Paul says: "[I] now rejoice in my sufferings

[1] Phil. iii. 10.

for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His Body's sake, which is the Church."[1] Here suffering becomes both *sacrificial* and *meritorious*, being borne through the grace of God and in union with the merits of Christ.

From all this we may see how little reason there is for regarding suffering as inconsistent with the justice and love of God. As well might a father who corrects his wayward child be accused of cruelty, as our Heavenly Father, Who by the agency of suffering is training us, His children, for that life of eternal happiness where "there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain."[2]

Suffering, as we have already noticed, is not confined to man, but extends also to the lower animals; so that we realise the truth of S. Paul's words, "that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now." And the inference which he draws from this fact is that since all creation is involved in man's suffering, so all creation awaits and expects a redemption which shall be revealed through man when he reaches the goal of his life and enters upon the glories of eternity.

In the passage we have referred to, S. Paul begins by comparing the sufferings of earth with the glories of heaven. And though these sufferings are not light, for he speaks of every creature groaning and

[1] Col. i. 24. [2] Rev. xxi. 4.

travailing in pain, yet so overwhelming is the glory to which they lead, that he reaches the conclusion that no real comparison is possible; for he says, "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."[1] The same thought is expressed elsewhere in the words, "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

These are not the words of a man whose life had been singularly free from sorrow. On the contrary few men have ever known more of suffering than did S. Paul—suffering of every kind—physical hardships, bodily pain, dangers to life and limb, together with the mental sorrows caused by the rejection by his own countrymen of the gospel he laboured so incessantly to impart to them. And more still, he experienced the sorrows of wounded affection, as his most trusted friends and converts deserted him, and easily allowed his enemies to pervert them from the truths which he had taught them. But though he had experienced so keenly the pains and sorrows of human life, though he knew so intimately the afflictions and tribulations which only a great soul can experience, yet he realised the glories of heaven as of such surpassing splendour, the happiness of being with Christ in eternity with such intense appreciation,

[1] Rom. viii. 18.

that the bitterest sorrows of life faded into insignificance when compared with them.

What, however, gives to this passage its unique interest is its revelation of S. Paul's sympathy with nature. He is thinking not only of the sufferings of man, but of that lower nature to which man is kin, the sufferings of animal life, and, perhaps, even of inanimate creatures so far as they are subject to vanity, that is, to failure and disappointment. He describes every creature as waiting and watching for the revelation which is to come to them through man; and the word he uses, which we have translated, "earnest expectation,"[1] suggests spectators leaning forward over the ropes which restrain them, and watching to catch the first glimpse of an approaching pageant.

He tells us that "the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope." What precisely does he mean by creation? The words he uses, "every creature," certainly cannot be limited to mankind, and probably extend even beyond the lower animals to everything that God hath made in this world. The whole animal creation we know shares in the general suffering, some creatures directly through their relation to man, but in a broader sense we may say of the whole sentient world that it suffers pain, and is subject to vanity. Inanimate nature, too, seems to be included under the term;

[1] (ἀποκαραδοκία.)

for in a measure it shares in the present mystery of evil, and is subject to vanity in that it falls short in many ways of its ideal.

In using the word vanity, S. Paul is calling our attention to that which is disappointing in nature, the waste and sadness which we see everywhere, the ineffectiveness of forces which have such great possibilities ; for example, the myriads of seeds which produce nothing, the struggle that goes on in the kingdom of animate existence in which so many individuals perish, so few come to maturity. The word translated, vanity,[1] signifies that which is without result, which does not reach its end, and is the opposite to that which is perfect and complete.

Further, S. Paul tells us that this subjection to vanity was not voluntary, that is, not by its own will nor indeed by its own fault, but on account of him through whom it was subjected, that is, on account of man; for it was because of Adam's sin that the ground was cursed, and therefore S. Paul draws the inference that as nature is thus involuntarily involved in man's sin, it is but just that in some sense it should share in his redemption.

"The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now." Nature has a mysterious solidarity with man, sorrowing in his sorrow, and rejoicing in his joy. Once all was harmony, and beauty, and peace, when "God saw everything that

[1] (ματαιότης.)

He had made, and, behold, it was very good."[1] Now, as the preacher[2] teaches us, all is vanity, sorrow, pain, disease, death. And this corruption and decay belong not only to man but to all the creatures around him.

This seems very dark and gloomy, but S. Paul points out the silver lining to the cloud; for he reminds us that these pains and sufferings, which wring, as it were, a groan from nature, are but the travail pains which lead to birth into a better world, into a higher state than we now know. This is the hope which he sets before us, the hope of all creation—to be delivered from the bondage of our present state, and to be born into a new world wherein dwelleth righteousness. Now we have sorrow in the experience of the birth-pains which precede this deliverance. As, however, all nature is associated with us in the pains of travail, so all nature must share with us in the glories of this deliverance.

Feelings of compassion and humanity impel us to kindness toward the lower animals; and this is more generally recognised in our day than ever before. But there have been saints like S. Paul and S. Francis of Assisi who seemed to see in the lower animals fellow-heirs with them of that great world beyond, where all suffering shall be done away, and hope shall be realised in the kingdom of glory.

Suffering is everywhere around us. Sooner or

[1] Gen. i. 31. [2] *Cf.* Eccles. i.

later it touches almost every life. But we must always insist on this great truth of revelation that suffering is beneficial, that "Our light affliction worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." It is beneficial, that is, if we bear it rightly in reliance upon God's grace, and in union with the Passion of Christ. This is what S. Paul dwells upon again and again. He tells us that we are "Heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together (with Him)."[1]

If we analyse suffering we find that it falls into two divisions which may roughly be described as pain and sorrow, the suffering of the body and the suffering of the mind and soul. I am not forgetting that the relationship between these two is very close, so that it is difficult to separate them. The suffering of the mind frequently affects the body; mental distress leads to physical break-down; and similarly the suffering of the body affects the mind; long continued and severe pain or protracted disease has often a weakening effect upon the mind. But where we see the distinguishing feature is that mental and moral suffering or sorrow is the peculiar privilege of man.

Pain, as we have pointed out, the animals share with him, but not sorrow. There are, I am aware, apparent exceptions to this — manifestations of mental distress on the part of animals. But these,

[1] Rom. viii. 17.

when carefully examined, prove to be no real exceptions, since such distress is the result of instinct rather than of moral or mental pain; that is, it is not caused by reflection nor is it in its full sense wounded love. We may take, as an illustration of this, the wonderful self-sacrifice of a bird for her young. When they are threatened with danger she manifests the most intense distress, and unhesitatingly risks her life in a vain effort to defend them. But that this is instinctive rather than moral may be shown from the fact that in a few months she will drive those young forth from her, and think no more about them. It is maternal *instinct*, not true maternal *love*, which impels her to lay down her life for her young.

A far more difficult phenomenon to explain is the affection of a dog for its master, and the distress that it will show at that master's death. All we can say in this case is that it is not observed amongst dogs in their natural state as wild animals; that it seems to be the result of association with man, and that even in this case it is confined to a few species of the race. True sorrow implies power of reflection and a moral nature; and though we may occasionally find its adumbration in some of the lower animals, the absence of the power of reflection and of a moral nature deprives such instances of their ethical character.

CHAPTER II.

Sorrow and its Causes.

In our first chapter we investigated suffering in its general aspect, and, after considering its cause, its purpose, and its end, we observed that it fell into two divisions: Pain and sorrow; the former shared by all creation, the latter man's solitary privilege. Let us now examine somewhat more closely the second division, that sorrow which meets us everywhere, and let us especially consider the chief causes which produce it in our life in this world.

But, first, what do we mean by sorrow? We all know sorrow by experience, even though we may find it difficult to express in words an adequate definition of it. If, however, we try to explain the effect which sorrow produces upon our mind and inmost soul, should we not say that it is a deep pain or distress of mind caused by a sense of want of harmony between ourselves and the world around us? This sense, while seldom analysed and often not realised, is generally present when we are in sorrow. For is not sorrow a discontent and rebellion against things as they are, because we feel that they

ought to be different, that we ought to be different, that we were made for something better and higher than this life of disappointment and suffering?

In speaking of discontent and rebellion against things as they are, I do not mean rebellion against God's Providence; for in his sorrow the Christian will always say to God, "Thy Will be done;" but I mean rather that there is brought home to us a conviction that while the peculiar sorrows which have befallen us are right, because for some wise purpose God's Providence allows them, and therefore we accept them with loving submission, and strive to bear them with patient humility, yet they in themselves testify to a condition of things which is not right, and which was not God's original purpose for man, but was occasioned by that evil which has not only marred the world as God made it, but has perverted man's own nature. In other words, our sorrows bear witness to the effects of sin in the world around us, and awaken longings for that new heaven and new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness, where there can be no more sorrow because there will be no more sin.

Sorrow thus regarded has the effect of showing us this world in its true light, as a world which can never satisfy the desires of the human heart, and so of driving us to God not only for consolation in our distress, but as the only rest for our souls. Sorrow brings home to us the thought so beautifully expressed by S. Augustine in his Confessions:

"Thou, O Lord, hast formed us for Thyself, and our hearts are restless till they rest in Thee."[1]

From this point of view let us consider some of the immediate causes of sorrow. The ultimate cause, as we well know, is the presence of sin or the rebellion of the world against God.

1. First among the causes of sorrow we may place *disappointment*, the sorrow of *failure*. How often it comes to those who have done their best, who can say with truth that though they have failed it has not been by their own fault, not for lack of effort or perseverance. And this is true of disappointment and failure in almost any of the pursuits which engross man's interest, but especially in the pursuit of fame and wealth.

We see it in the painter who works hard at his art, and yet never succeeds in obtaining that recognition from the world which he strives to win. We find it in the business man who rises early and late, takes rest and eats the bread of carefulness that he may make, not a great fortune, but a sufficient competence to maintain his family in comfort, to educate his children, and yet fails. He has left no stone unturned. The end for which he worked was so entirely a good end. He desired money not for himself but for those he loved. And yet, in spite of all his efforts, he meets only with bitter disappointment. We read of it in the story of the poor scholar who, after years of painful saving and toilsome

[1] Confess. Lib. I. i. 1.

effort, obtains the education for which he has striven, and becomes really learned only to find that the world has no appreciation of his ability, and will afford him no opportunity for using the knowledge which he has so laboriously acquired. These are tragic instances of disappointment, but there are lesser ones in everyone's life, things we tried so hard to do, pursuits we followed which were not sordid nor mean, but noble and good, and yet our best efforts have ended in failure.

How are we to meet this sorrow? Surely by remembering that the saints will not be ranged in heaven according to the degree of the success which they won in this world, but sometimes rather in the order of the failure of their worldly plans. Let us remember how dangerous is success in this world, fanning, as it does, the flames of ambition and pride, luring the soul on to dizzy heights, not of spiritual progress but of worldly pre-eminence—dizzy heights from which the fall is proportionately great. And yet how blessed is that fall, if it takes place in this life, and we see "that the world we loved so much has turned to dust and ashes at our touch!"

How many who do succeed begin to work from right motives, and yet come in the end to glory in their own success, and to forget that it has been God's gift! How many, too, are glorified by others because they are successful, and receive as their reward this world's glory. One of the greatest saints of Jesus Christ, in the hour of his darkest

experience, when even his work for souls—souls which he loved so dearly—seemed to be an utter failure, proclaimed as the principle of his life and work, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."[1]

We shed bitter tears of disappointment and failure; and yet, perhaps, these very disappointments, these very failures are God's loving way of drawing us to Himself, of holding us back from the dangers which attend success in the world.

If we ask what event has most changed the course of this world, and influenced it for good, there can be but one answer—the death on the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. And yet of what does the Cross tell us but of apparent failure? We follow the life of Christ; we see its fair promises developing; the little world in which He moved gradually gathering around Him, and bearing witness to Him that "Never man spake like this Man,"[2] wondering "at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth."[3]

That beautiful life promised so much, but the Cross shows how those promises, humanly speaking, ended in failure. The nation He came to teach rejected Him; the people He came to save crucified Him; a few disciples only remained faithful to Him. And yet out of that failure came the greatest

[1] Gal. vi. 14. [2] S. John vii. 46.
[3] S. Luke iv. 22.

success the world has ever known, the success which has regenerated mankind.

How different it would all have been if our Lord's teaching had met with the success it deserved, if the nation had accepted Him as their Messiah and their King! What would have been the immediate result upon the Jews we cannot tell, but it is not difficult to see that on the world at large the result would have been disastrous. That wondrous life, to which we all turn in our hours of darkness and distress, the life of the Man of Sorrows, would have furnished no example to those in trouble, would have possessed no attraction to those weighed down with the burdens of life, would have offered no encouragement to those who have failed. Our Lord could say, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest,"[1] because He had laboured and borne to the end the burden of the Cross. But, if His life had ended in earthly success, this invitation would have been unmeaning, and therefore unhelpful.

If disappointment and failure bring tears to your eyes, let them not be tears of rebellion or bitterness, but gentle tears, relieving the burdened heart—tears of resignation, tears of patience, tears of thankfulness. For "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy," that is, if they are such tears as these; for then they will be indeed the seed of that harvest of joy which we shall behold growing even in this life, and the perfect

[1] S. Matt. xi. 28.

fruit of which we shall find in the life beyond. For, "He that now goeth on his way weeping, and beareth forth good seed, shall doubtless come again with joy, and bring his sheaves with him."[1]

2. Another cause of sorrow found in many lives is the sense of *injury* and *wrong* done to ourselves, or, what is harder to bear, done to those we love. This sense of injury often arouses passion and leads to angry tears. But, alas, angry tears are useless tears, for they hurt only ourselves, not those who have wronged us. And, then, how dangerous they are, in that they harden the heart and foster a spirit of bitterness which crushes out from the soul the love of God.

It has been said that the sin which has brought most misery into the world is the sin of anger. It led to the first murder, the murder of Abel; and our Lord teaches us that it is essentially of the same character as murder, for He says, "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill. . . . But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment."[2] In how many homes domestic happiness is wrecked by the sin of anger! Some one member of the family, the father perhaps, by his frequent indulgence in the habit of anger, destroys the peace, ruins the happiness of that home.

When the sense of wrong done to us or to others is rankling in our hearts, we need to learn how

[1] Ps. cxxvi. 6-7. [2] S. Matt. v. 21-22.

our Lord and Master bore the injuries which were inflicted on Him. He endured such wrongs as none other ever suffered; and when these wrongs had reached their climax He said only, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."[1] We must learn from Him to forgive—to forgive not some wrongs, but all; not only the wrongs which are done to us, but those which are done to others who are near and dear to us. We must, after the example of Christ, even strive to excuse the wrong-doer, pleading for them, as He did, that "they know not what they do."

It is always true, truer than we recognise, that those who injure us or others do not realise the sin which they are committing. Sometimes they are not conscious of any wrong-doing. More often, perhaps, they know that their conduct is unjustifiable, but they do not clearly see, as God does and perhaps as we do, the intrinsic evil in it —that it is arousing in us the sin of anger, and injuring our souls. If some wrong is rankling in our heart, and therefore killing the love of God in us, let us earnestly pray, "From envy, hatred, and malice, and all uncharitableness, good Lord, deliver us."

3. A third common cause of sorrow is remorse. Not only are there tears of disappointment and anger, but no tears are so bitter as those of remorse. In the last case we considered the pain of mind

[1] S. Luke xxiii. 34.

or sorrow which is caused by our inability to forgive others who have wronged us. Now we must think of that which comes from being unable to forgive ourselves.

Remorse! What is it but the biting tooth of self-reproach, finding its strength and permanence in dissappointed pride. Remorse, like the false penitence of Judas, is not a change of heart, but a pain of heart, eating into the very life, vain regrets for a past which is viewed in the light of its consequences rather than in relation to its guilt, a past which can never be undone, but which can always be repented of. Remorse is a foretaste of hell as truly as penitence gives us a foretaste of heaven.

We need very carefully to distinguish between the consequences of sin to ourselves and the guilt of sin in relation to God. The more we realise our guilt the deeper will be our penitence. The more we think of the consequences of sin to ourselves, of what we have destroyed of the goods of earth and heaven, of what we have lost of the opportunities of this life and the possibilities of that to come, the more bitter will be our remorse. But remorse is quite useless. As we have said, it is simply the uprising of disappointed pride. We are angry with ourselves because we have forfeited our opportunities and injured our faculties and ruined ourselves by our sin. Our anger makes us miserable, but it does not lead us to penitence. In penitence we think not of ourselves but of God,

of His love which we have sinned against, of His goodness which we have rejected; and we remember His mercy and pity; for, while accepting gladly the temporal punishments of our sins in the consequences which they involve, we hope for pardon and restoration to God's love and favour.

4. Then there is the sorrow of bereavement, when we have lost one dearer to us, perhaps, than our own life, when we feel deserted, left to tread that path of life alone which for so long we trod with another who was our strength and comfort. What sorrow is so great as the sorrow of bereavement!

We shall leave this for consideration in a special chapter, only pointing out now that, like all sorrows, our Lord experienced it, for He wept at the grave of Lazarus. We must, therefore, seek our consolation in His sympathy and in the realisation of our fellowship with Him Who was the Man of Sorrows.

5. The sorrows which we have considered, however, in themselves bring no relief to the burdened heart, but they are intended to lead us to the true comfort which is found in the sorrow of penitence. The tears of penitence are like the summer rain falling so quietly, and drunk in so eagerly by the thirsty earth; like the summer rain refreshing the parched ground and reviving the drooping flowers. What a contrast there is between the rainstorms of winter, in their violence denuding the earth, leaving devastation and destruction in their path, and the gentle showers of the summer! Such is

the contrast between the tears of remorse and disappointment and those of penitence.

"Blessed are they that mourn!" Yes, there are tears which bring joy, which relieve the pent-up feelings, which seem to moisten the hardened heart, which wash away in their course all bitterness. They are the tears of a sorrow which is borne, like Hezekiah's, in reliance upon God. The sick king, looking back upon his sufferings, said: "I did mourn as a dove: mine eyes fail with looking upward: O Lord, I am oppressed; undertake for me. What shall I say? He hath both spoken unto me, and Himself hath done it: I shall go softly all my years in the bitterness of my soul. O Lord, by these things men live, and in all these things is the life of my spirit: so wilt Thou recover me, and make me to live."[1]

"Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted." Hezekiah says, "I did mourn as a dove." We must mourn as moved by *the* Dove, the Holy Ghost, the Comforter; and that mourning in itself brings consolation and strength.

When we speak of the blessings that flow from the sorrow of penitence, the difficulty may arise in some minds that so many of our sorrows are not caused by our own sins but by the sins of others, by the sinfulness of the world in which we live. We quite recognise the need for penitence when the burden of our own sin is pressing upon us. We

[1] Is. xxxviii. 14-16.

are quite ready to say with the penitent robber, "We receive the due reward of our deeds," when we can trace our sorrows directly to our misdoings. But how are we to regard those many sorrows which come from faults not our own?

The answer is not far to seek. If we realise the solidarity of our race, and especially the fellowship which exists between every member of the Body of Christ, we shall not be satisfied to confine our penitence to our own sins. I do not say we are responsible for the sins of the Church, of which we are members, and of that great world of humanity which so intimately touches upon our individual lives, but we are certainly deeply affected by them. We must, therefore, go out beyond our personal sins, and mourn for those sins of the Church which so greatly hinder her work in the world, and retard the triumphs of Christ's kingdom—the sin of pride which is so largely the cause of disunion among Christians, and the sin of luke-warmness which is such a stumbling-block to the conversion of the world.

The sins of the Church demand repentance. And if we do not mourn for them, how is this debt to be paid? Every Christian should recognise as incumbent on him the duty of penitence for the sins of the Church; that is, of confessing her sins, of earnest prayer for their pardon, and of patient endurance of those difficulties which the Church has to contend with, realising that they are the result, and in a sense the punishment of her sins.

We are ready enough to say that the Church fails in her work in the world because she falls so far short of her Master's standard in teaching and practice. But who is responsible for this failure? Surely every member of the Church, first in the sense that every member must do his best to remedy what he sees to be amiss, by striving in his own teaching and conduct to set forth the highest ideal of the Church's life, and then to mourn with tears of penitence that he himself and the other members of Christ's body fall so far short of that ideal.

In our penitence, however, we can go still further and consider ourselves as members of the human race, and therefore bound to work for its improvement and to mourn for its sins. This penitence will manifest itself chiefly in prayer to God for pardon for the sins of the world, for an outpouring of His Holy Spirit upon unregenerate humanity, and for a revival of the operation of the Spirit in those who by baptism have received the gifts of the Holy Ghost.

In this chapter we have examined some of the causes of sorrow in this world. It is fitting that we should end by pointing to the spirit in which those sorrows must be met and borne — the spirit of penitence. Thus, and thus only, will sorrow work in us the grace of sanctification, and, strange paradox, will issue in happiness; for our Lord has said, "Happy are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted"—comforted by the Holy Ghost whose

office it is to lead us in the way of penitence, to teach us to mourn for the sins of the world, and, through mourning, to guide us to abiding happiness ; for there is a joy in penitence, which softens the bitterness of sorrow and works in us peace and sanctification.

CHAPTER III.

Sorrow as a Revelation.

SORROW not only teaches us many lessons, but it contains in itself a great revelation; for it shows man what he is and what God means him to be both here and in eternity. Sorrow is not merely a means of discipline, by which we make progress in the path to glory. It is a revelation of man's true condition as fallen from the original purpose for which he was created, but as still possessing aspirations for something higher and better.

The lower creation groans and travails in pain together with us, but the animals accept their surroundings without rebellion and without a desire for something different. They find their satisfaction in their present life, and know no longings for an ideal life which can only be realised in a far distant future. With man it is not so. The various sorrows and sufferings to which he is subject here, bring home to him the limitations and weakness inherent in his present state. He finds himself so powerless to stem the tide of the world's opposition, that

though from sheer weakness he often goes with that tide, it is almost always with the protest of his better nature against what he is doing.

It is not that the life of the world around him is too high for him, that he cannot attain to it, or, having attained, cannot hold his own in it. It is just the contrary; that when he accepts the world's mode of life he feels he is sinking to a lower plane than that in which he ought to walk. He feels degraded; and this sense of deterioration forces upon him the conviction that he was made for better things, since the best that the world can offer does not, cannot, satisfy him.

And yet how difficult it is to live above the world, to realise our ideal! We seem to be so a part of the world that we are unable to separate ourselves from it except for a short space when the aspiration for a higher life lifts us, as it were, above the world. Sinful things are so attractive; and yet when I choose them, when I yield to them, I cannot deceive myself that they are right. I cannot but call them by their true name, sin. Though they may give me a moment's pleasure, after that has passed they leave the sting of self-reproach, the sense of degradation.

If it be said that our best efforts and aspirations also are but transitory, it may be replied that they do not leave a sting behind. If we cannot retain the exaltation of holiness, at least we regret having lost it. This, however, is not so in the case of the

sin to which we have yielded ; for sin leaves behind it the feeling of degradation, the bitterness of remorse, the sense that we have done that which was unworthy of our true self.

What, however, is all this but a revelation that we are fallen creatures? As S. Paul puts it, "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me ; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man : but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members."[1]

We must remember, however, that this truth, which S. Paul so eloquently expresses, is only realised through sorrow. It is not when we are basking in the sunshine of the world's favours, when success attends our every effort, and the praise of the world's appreciation rings in our ears, that we realise our fallen condition. It is not when the enjoyment of what this world can give in art and literature and social life fills our cup to overflowing that we recognise the tremendous struggle which is going on within us between the flesh and the spirit.

[1] Rom. vii. 18-23.

But it is when the sorrow of failure and disappointment, the bitterness of injury and wrong, the sense of wounded affection and bereavement bring home to us the worthlessness and vanity of the best which the world can give, that we discover our true condition, that we appreciate the fact that the world cannot satisfy us, that we are held down in bondage by its chains, that we belong to a higher and better world than this. And then there sweeps over our soul the conviction of our fallen state, that we were not made by God to live such a life, that we have within us aspirations and desires so strong that they in themselves witness to our true life as akin to God, and therefore reveal to us what we are: creatures made for God, but fallen from our high estate and living as aliens here, our better nature revolting at the degradation which the sin of the world imposes upon us.

Every part of our nature, through sorrow and pain, brings home to us this fact, that there is something out of joint in our present state, that we are meant to attain to a true and enduring happiness. I say every part of our nature; for body, mind and soul, alike force upon us the conviction that we are fallen creatures, yet still with the powers of restoration and with a glorious future awaiting us. It is not, however, when the body is enjoying the exuberance of health and life that we recognise this; but when it is suffering from pain and disease. It is not when the mind is working with clearness and vigour,

and exulting in the mastery of the problems before it, that we are driven to realise the imperfections even of this most glorious part of our nature; but when the mind is perplexed and distressed. It is not when the soul is rejoicing in the possession of all its desires, is tasting the sweets of earthly love and happiness, that there is borne in upon us the overwhelming conviction that we are not in our present condition what we were meant to be; but when the soul is suffering from bereavement and sorrow. The fact is so abundantly evident that we are out of harmony with the world in which we live, that it proves beyond dispute that this is not our true home. This, then, is the first great revelation of sorrow, that we are fallen beings in a fallen world, that we cannot be satisfied with what we are or contented with what we have in this life.

But this is not the only revelation which sorrow brings us; for, having convinced us of the impossibility of finding any abiding happiness in this world, sorrow reveals to us our true end in that life of glory, which is reached only by the pathway of suffering. We may ask, How does sorrow reveal this to us? Surely by the aspirations it awakens in us for a deeper, a more lasting happiness than we can find here. There is in me a longing for something which I have not yet attained to, a desire for an ideal which may satisfy at once my mind and heart. But where can this ideal be found? Only in God. And sorrow drives me to God. It is the sentinel warning

me back from the dangers of worldliness and sin, and pointing me to the only path which can lead to happiness, to the way which brings me to God.

We find our ideal realised in the Man of Sorrows, our Lord Jesus Christ. When we are in distress of mind or pain of body it is to the story of His life we turn for comfort; and the parts we then read are generally those which tell of His sorrows and sufferings. We read the story of His Passion, of His rejection by those He came to save, those He pleaded with so lovingly during the three years of His ministry on earth. We dwell on His desertion by the friends whom He trusted, whom He took with Him to be witnesses of His agony in the Garden, whom He warned to watch and pray, lest they should enter into temptation. We dwell on the pathos of His death on the Cross, first on the tender words with which He bade farewell to life, praying for His murderers, promising Paradise to the penitent robber, providing for His mother and His friend S. John; then on those last solemn utterances which told of the sufferings of His mind and body, and of His perfect trust in His Father's love: "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" "I thirst"; "It is finished"; "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit."

Why is it that the preaching of the Cross has such a marvellous power of attraction in the world to-day? Why is it that men who are untouched by all else are drawn irresistibly on Good Friday to

the foot of the Cross, and find strength and courage to meet the difficulties of their life in the teachings and example of that dying Lord? Surely it is a witness to the sanctifying power of sorrow. Surely it is because in our Lord Jesus Christ we find an ideal which satisfies us because it is true—true, on the one hand, to the experiences of our life here, to the experiences of pain and sorrow, of disappointment and failure, and, on the other hand, because it witnesses to the splendid possibilities of our great hereafter, when our sorrow shall be turned into joy, and when those who have suffered with Christ shall reign with Him in eternity.

What do we learn frum the study of our Lord's life? Certainly that the true purpose of life is not to please ourselves, not to win the applause of the world, but to do our Father's will, to accomplish our Father's work, to glorify God. And, moreover, we learn that in the fulfilment of this purpose we must expect to meet with opposition and disappointment; that we shall not find the world on our side—indeed, that the world will hinder us and persecute us by every means in its power; but, with God as our help and our strength, we can attain even here to a happiness which does not depend upon success or upon the possession of wealth or fame, but upon the development of character, upon becoming what God means us to be—His children, and therefore partakers of the divine nature and heirs of heaven.

This ideal satisfies our mind, for the mind delights in the pursuit of truth; and this ideal is true both to our experience and our desires. There is a fascination in investigating the processes of nature, because it leads to the discovery of the principles or laws which underlie phenomena. There is an interest in working out problems of mathematics, in thinking out questions of metaphysics. And yet all these investigations contain elements of disappointment because they all fall short of absolute truth. We frame beautiful theories, but when we come to apply them we find a flaw somewhere. The working hypothesis is useful, and leads, perhaps, to other discoveries, but almost always there remains a weak spot. But, while this is our experience in every department of mere human research, *it is not so in our ideal—Christ.* In Him are no imperfections. He satisfies absolutely the demands of our mind, for He is Truth, absolute Truth. He not only taught what was true; He not only left us an example which was beautiful; but He Himself is the Truth, and therefore our mind can rest in Him.

Then not less does this ideal satisfy our heart. We were made to love. We were endowed with a strange craving to possess the object of our love. We try to satisfy this longing by the acquirement of the possessions of this world, but they do not satisfy the heart. Even the earthly passion of love gradually loses its power as we find out imperfec-

tions in the object of our love. But with Christ as our ideal this never happens, for in Him, as we have said, are no imperfections, and, as He satisfies the mind because He is Truth, so He satisfies our hearts because He is altogether worthy of our affections and because He loves us.

We must, however, constantly remind ourselves that it is sorrow which reveals to us these higher aspirations, which draws us, we might say drives us, to God as our ideal. And if we ask why is this, we find the answer in the primeval revelation that we are made in God's image, that we are divine. This image has been defaced by sin; its beauty is often forgotten in the attractions of the world, especially when the world crowns our efforts with success and greets them with applause; but when failure and disappointment and bereavement is our lot, in other words, when sorrow reigns in us, it reveals to us our true character, and sends us for consolation to God, in Whose image we were made. If this is so with the unregenerate, how much more with those who have been restored by grace! The unregenerate human heart is restless until it rests in God; but the heart in which grace reigns seeks God, finds joy in the pursuit of the knowledge of God, and finds its happiness in the possession of God.

These two revelations which sorrow brings to us, of our fallen condition now and our glorious possibilities, are the very foundation upon which our life here must be built; for they are the recognition of

our weakness, and the realisation of our splendid possibilities as the children of God, now undergoing that discipline which is to prepare us for the glories of heaven.

CHAPTER IV.

The Value of Sorrow.

In treating of the value of sorrow, it is evident that we have already, to some extent, traversed this ground; for in the last chapter we found that sorrow had its value in revealing to us our present condition as fallen from original righteousness, and our future possibilities in the life of glory. We may now, however, approach the subject from a somewhat different point of view, and, even at the risk of repetition, consider other ways in which the value of sorrow is manifested in our life, especially as an antidote to the dangerous seductions of the world in which we live.

It is important that we should realise at the outset how much our characters in their development depend upon the ideals we set before us. Human life has two great attractions: one to this world, the other to the world beyond. And the chief danger to the soul lies in forgetting that this world, even at its best, is not and cannot be our home; that our home is in heaven; that our life on earth,

full as it may be of interests and of duties which bring with them much passing happiness, is nevertheless but an episode in our true life, an important episode, one on which the true life of the future depends, but not that life itself, for our true life is eternal. How important it is to keep this steadily before us, and yet how difficult.

We know as an absolute certainty that our life here can be but short; that it is likely also to be full of trouble. Can we then be content, as reasonable beings, to make this life and its interests our first thought, to devote to the claims of the world our best efforts? As Christians we cannot for a moment admit that this is reasonable, though, through infirmity, we have to confess that the things of time do engross us often to the great detriment of our interests in eternity.

There are, unfortunately, men and women who have no belief in immortality; who look for no life beyond the grave; and it is therefore natural that they should try to obtain from the fleeting years of their present existence all the happiness they can. We should also expect that these would prize most highly each moment, and endeavour to prolong this life to the uttermost. We do not, however, find this to be the case; for so little do unbelievers seem to consider this life worth living, that they frequently put an end to it by suicide. Recent statistics show that suicide is enormously on the increase, and that in this Germany heads the list of all countries. But

Germans are the people who more than any others have given up faith in Christ and the hope of immortality. While there are numerous exceptions, of course, it is not unfair to say that the great majority of those who commit suicide have either never had any belief in the life of the world to come, or if they have, have lost it, and by their act they proclaim their conviction that the life *in this world alone* is not worth living. And yet how many of us who are Christians, and by our profession pledged to live for eternity, find the interests of the world around us so fascinating that they fill our hearts and engross our thoughts often to the exclusion of everything else!

Here, then, we recognise the great value of sorrow, in that it is the chief antidote to worldliness. And by worldliness we do not mean so much the pomps and vanities of this sinful world as the attractions of things which are in themselves innocent and even beautiful. There is much in this life which is good and beautiful and makes for a very real happiness; but the danger is that we should rest in these things, and be satisfied with them, and in that satisfaction should forget the true end for which we were created —the glory of God—the true life which awaits us in His kingdom in heaven.

We have said that character in its development depends largely upon the ideals we set before us. Few people set before them *as their ideal* a life of sinful pleasure; for even those who yield to the

seductions of such a life admit that it is wrong, and know that in the end it brings misery and sorrow. But there are many who take as their ideal a life of domestic happiness, or of enjoyment of art and literature, or a useful public life. All these things are right and good in themselves, but for this very reason they possess peculiar danger in that they tend to satisfy man with what he has here, and so to prevent the development of his capacity for the joys of eternity; hence they tend to dwarf the growth of his spiritual nature.

We need, therefore, carefully to consider our Lord's teaching in the Sermon on the Mount. He said, "Blessed are ye that hunger now: for ye shall be filled. Blessed are ye that weep now: for ye shall laugh." And again, "Woe unto you that are full! for ye shall hunger. Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep."[1] There is little room to doubt the significance of these words. Christ warns us against what we might call the *full* life of this world, not the life which is full of sordid or sinful pleasures, but the life which satisfies because its interests are not sinful, just such a life as we have been describing: a life of domestic happiness, a life of intellectual activity, or a life of public usefulness, a life which finds its joys in the beauty and good of this world.

We cannot too strongly insist that such a life may be found, that there is here much to be admired and

[1] S. Luke vi. 21, 25.

to be moderately used; but its danger lies in the very fact that such a life is not sinful, that it does not arouse the stings of conscience, but that it satisfies and fills the desires of the mind and heart to the exclusion of that hunger and thirst after righteousness, that longing for communion with God which alone can prepare us rightly for the rewards of heaven. Hence our Lord says, "Blessed are ye that hunger now: for ye shall be filled."

What a wonderful appetite hunger is! It is the stimulus to all earnest effort. We may trace to physical hunger all developments of civilisation; for they have been marked by the invention of labour-saving devices. We may trace to intelligent hunger all discoveries in the realms of philosophy and science. We may trace to moral hunger all progress in righteousness.

We need, therefore, to set before us the question, For what are we hungering? for what are we working? For all labour has its end in the satisfaction of some hunger. Is it for the good things of this world only? Is our hunger satisfied by the enjoyment of the beauties of art and literature, or even of the happiness of domestic life? Or are we hungering and thirsting for righteousness, for communion with God, for the joys which await us in the life to come? If we are hungering for these, that very hunger will lead us to work for them, and in our work to develop the capacity to possess them. But if we are *full* now, satisfied with the

things of the present, rejoicing in the attainments of this life, should we not seriously consider our Lord's words of warning, "Woe unto you that are full! for ye shall hunger. Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep."

Surely Christ means that the time will come when all these delights of earth shall pall upon us, and when we shall hunger, and, perhaps, hunger in vain for the food of our immortal souls; that the time will come when the joys of earth will be taken from us, and we shall weep and mourn as we realise the vacancy their loss leaves in our life, how completely they had filled and satisfied our hearts.

Here, then, we recognise the chief value of sorrow, that it shatters our earthly ideals and drives us to God for consolation and guidance, that it brings home to us the experience of the Psalmist, "It is good for me that I have been in trouble: that I may learn Thy statutes."[1] Without sorrow we should strive to find our heaven on earth, and when the time came to leave it, when death called us away, we should have to leave all that we possessed, all that we loved. But sorrow continually forces upon us the vanity of all earthly joys, in that they do not last and therefore cannot permanently satisfy the soul. Sorrow, then, is no mark of God's displeasure, but rather a proof of

[1] Ps. cxix. 71.

His love, in that it weans us from the sweets of earth to the lasting happiness of heaven.

Dr. Neale, in one of his sermons to children, tells us that the vine-growers of the Rhine put tiles underneath the roots of their vines so that the roots may not strike too deeply into the earth. And the sorrows which God allows to come to us in life are like those tiles, intended to prevent our becoming too deeply rooted in the things of this world, intended to force us to produce the fruits of righteousness meet for the kingdom of heaven.

Is not this God's purpose in permitting the failure of our worldly ambitions even though they be noble ambitions? Success would have led us to root ourselves in the things of earth so deeply that when we came to die it would be impossible to transplant us to the kingdom of heaven. Is not this the reason why God suffers us to experience reverses, that in the passing away of earthly riches we may turn our hearts to the riches of grace?

Is not this what God would teach us when He allows us to suffer that greatest of all sorrows, the sorrow of bereavement in the loss of those we love? He would detach us from this world that our affections may be attached to the things of the world beyond. Bereavement shatters the interests of this life that we may have deeper interests in that life to which our loved one has

gone; for, as the claims of this world lose their hold upon us, the claims of the world to come draw us more strongly to prepare ourselves for eternity.

The great lesson we have to learn here is the lesson of detachment, and the means God uses to teach us this is sorrow. All through our lives, with gentle but persistent hand, God is drawing us away from the attractions of this life. For many, I suppose the first lesson in detachment is when they leave home to go to school. How homesick at first the boy is! But gradually he takes up his school-work and in its interests forgets his sorrow. Then, after years spent in a good school, there comes the next great effort of detachment, in parting from the school friends he has learned to love.

The same thing happens, but even with keener sorrow, when we leave college and break up the intimacies which are formed at a time of life when friendships are very close and dear. Then later on come the greater sorrows of domestic life, the loss perhaps of children who are called away from the home circle either by marriage or by the duties of their work in the world, or, harder still to bear, by the hand of death. Then, if we reach old age, there comes the frequent sorrow of the loss of our contemporaries as one old friend after another passes away, leaving us more lonely. Thus we see how God, by means of sorrow is constantly teaching us

to sit lightly to the joys of earth, to be ready to surrender them at His bidding, and to hunger and thirst after righteousness, that we may be filled with that joy which is eternal.

Again, sorrow sends us to the ideal life, the life of Jesus Christ, in which earthly success, domestic happiness and the enjoyments of art and literature are so conspicuously absent. There we have brought before us another ideal, not a life of success, but a life of sacrifice, a life of unselfishness—the life of love, the life chiefly centred on the things of another world. Which is our ideal? Whom do we really admire most, men who have won success in art, or literature, or finance, or heroes—soldiers who died for their country, missionaries .who have won the world to Christ, sisters of charity who have nursed the sick and suffering, priests of God who have ministered to the sinful and brought them back to the paths of heaven; in a word, those who followed Christ as their example? When these came to die they had so little to leave in this world, so much to find in that beyond, that death for them had no terrors. Those, on the other hand, who have had a full life in this world, who have never known what it is to hunger, have so much to leave, so little to hope for, that for them death is indeed the King of Terrors.

This, then, is the chief value of suffering, that it constantly shatters the best of the world's ideals and

drives us to another ideal, the ideal which we find set forth in the only perfect life—the life of Christ; the ideal which is realised in its fulness in the world beyond, the ideal which is eternal.

CHAPTER V.

The Effects of Sorrow.

WE have traced the chief causes of sorrow, we have considered it as a revelation of our present condition and future possibilities, and we have endeavoured to estimate its value as weaning us from the things of the world and driving us to God. We must now proceed to an investigation of the direct effects of sorrow upon the soul, either in refining and sanctifying us or in making us hard and rebellious against God; for sorrow produces two very opposite effects upon different souls.

In his second Epistle to the Corinthians, S. Paul contrasts two kinds of sorrow, which he calls godly sorrow and the sorrow of the world. The one he tells us worketh repentance unto salvation, and the other worketh death.[1] We must, of course, bear in mind that he is dealing in this passage only with sorrow caused by a conviction of sin, and it is for this reason that he speaks of godly sorrow working repentance. We may, however, extend the application to every kind of sorrow, and we

[1] *Cf.* 2 Cor. vii. 10,

shall find that our experience justifies his words, since sorrow works in the soul either life or death, according to the *manner* in which it is borne; that is, whether it is borne after the manner of the world or with reference to God: for the expression "godly sorrow," which S. Paul uses, is literally "sorrow with reference to God." The sorrow of the world, whether it be occasioned by sin, or failure, or bereavement, is a selfish sorrow which regards only our own suffering; while in godly sorrow, on the other hand, we strive to discover God's purpose in permitting the affliction to befall us, accepting it with perfect trust and with the conviction that God has some wise and loving purpose for us, even though we may not be able at once to recognise it.

The root of the sorrow which worketh death is generally disappointed pride, and its fruits are bitterness, sullenness, and a gloom which shuts out from our life all light and love. We are warned in the Epistle to the Hebrews to look diligently lest we fail of the grace of God by any root of bitterness springing up to trouble us.[1] It is not difficult to see that disappointed pride is the root of that false penitence of worldly sorrow which, as S. Paul tells us, worketh death; for remorse has its root in pride as contrition finds its root in love—and pride and love are absolutely contrary and inimical principles.

While not so obvious, it is also true that pride

[1] *Cf.* Heb. xii. 15,

is the root of every sorrow that *fails* to sanctify the human heart; for pride is the uprising and assertion of self, whereas love always implies and leads to the sacrifice of self for the object of our love. When, therefore, the sorrow of bereavement only embitters the mourner, it is because he is thinking exclusively of his own grief, of his own suffering, not of God's purpose in permitting that sorrow to come to him, not of the dear one he has lost, not of the opportunity afforded of glorifying God by submission to His holy will. Again, when failure or poverty hardens the heart it is clearly because we regard these things only as they affect us in the present, bringing to us, as they do, humiliation and suffering, not as they are intended by God to affect us in the future by preparing us for that far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, which is the fruit of all affliction rightly endured.

We may see this, perhaps, more clearly if we examine the first three fruits of the Spirit. S. Paul tells us that they are "love, joy, and peace."[1] But these are the very opposite to the effects or fruits of worldly sorrow, which, as we well know, are rebellion against God, bitterness and strife within ourselves. It may be well for us to consider what fruits our sorrow is producing. Is it making us loving towards God and our neighbour? do we rejoice in our tribulation as a means of glorifying God through the sanctification of our own souls,

[1] *Cf.* Gal. v. 22.

and does it leave, in spite of the sadness, a consciousness of peace within, which is the result of a sense of nearness to God through sorrow? Or, on the other hand, does our sorrow lead us to rebel against God, and does it fill us with gloom and sullenness, so that our whole being is at war with itself? Then the root of this bitterness must be found in the sin of pride, and our sorrow must be recognised as the worldly sorrow of selfishness, not as the godly sorrow which sanctifies, even though it brings with it intense suffering.

Sorrow, as we have seen in a previous chapter, may be traced to many causes. The most common is sin. Let us, therefore, consider this first. We can sorrow for sin from two reasons: Either because of the consequences of the sin to ourselves, or on account of the guilt of the sin in regard to God; that is, we can view our sin *selfishly* as it affects ourselves alone, or we can view it *justly* as it affects our relation to God. The first will lead to the bitterness of remorse, to the sorrow which worketh death; the second to that contrition which secures pardon and peace.

All sin brings in its train serious consequences to the sinner; sometimes in open disgrace, more often, perhaps, in the secret sense of injured faculties, of lost opportunities, of punishment imminent either in this life or in the life to come. And the fear of these consequences, the fear of punishment, may be the first element in our repentance, since it shows

us the bitterness of sin and the misery in which it involves the sinner. But while it may be the first motive it can never of itself lead to true repentance.

If we are to repent with that godly sorrow which worketh repentance not to be repented of, we must look upon our sin in its relation to God. We must consider the ingratitude involved in sin, since from God we have received nothing but tenderness and goodness. We must realise that it is an outrage against His love, an act of rebellion against His justice, an injury to His holiness. And we must sorrow, not merely for the consequences to ourselves in punishment, but for the guilt which we have incurred in regard to God, Who is so good and loving and holy. This will lead us, through the deep and blessed sorrow of contrition, to the joyous experience of the peace of God's pardon and forgiveness.

We have many examples of these two kinds of sorrow in regard to sin both in the Old and New Testaments. We shall confine ourselves to only one from each. In the Old Testament we see both the sorrow of the world and the godly sorrow manifested in the penitence of Saul and David. When Saul sinned by disobedience in regard to the destruction of the Amalekites, Samuel was sent to tell him of his sin. In the midst of his apparent grief the one thing which is uppermost in Saul's mind is the immediate consequences of his sin in the loss of his

kingly position. The one request he makes is not that God shall forgive him his sin, but that Samuel shall continue to honour him before his people. What he fears is not God's displeasure but exposure in the sight of men.[1]

How different is David's penitence! Nathan is sent to convict him of his sin, and David at once confesses, "I have sinned against the Lord," and without a murmur accepts the penance of his sin in the death of his child.[2] Again, when he had sinned by numbering the people, and Gad is sent to offer him one of three punishments, he chooses that which comes directly from God, saying, "I am in a great strait: let us fall now into the hand of the Lord; for His mercies are great: and let me not fall into the hand of man." And, when the people were smitten with pestilence, he said to the Lord, "Lo, I have sinned, and I have done wickedly: but these sheep, what have they done? let Thine hand, I pray Thee, be against me, and against my father's house."[3] Saul thinks only of the consequences; David chiefly of the sin. Saul desires to escape exposure; David pleads only for pardon.

If we turn to the New Testament, we find a similar parallel in the penitence of Judas and S. Peter. Judas went out and hanged himself in the anguish of his remorse; S. Peter went out and wept bitterly, but doubted not His Master's love and

[1] *Cf.* 1 Sam. xv. 30. [2] 2 Sam. xii. 7-24.
[3] 2 Sam. xxiv. 14, 17.

forgiveness. The bitter tears of Judas came from remorse; those of S. Peter came from contrition. The penitence of Judas led to suicide; that of S. Peter to pardon, peace, and restoration. The one ended the life of the sinner; the other formed the foundation for a new life of faithful work for God.

So far we have been considering that sorrow which is the result of our own actions, which flows from our own sin; but there is also the selfish sorrow which rebels against God's Providence when sickness, misfortune or bereavement befall us. But these trials are all common to men, and why should not we experience them as well as others? The effects which they produce in us will depend on whether we regard them as God's loving discipline, intended for the sanctification of our nature, or whether we look upon them as altogether unjust and cruel.

The most important question for us, when we are in sorrow, must be, how can I use this sorrow for my sanctification? How can I make it an opportunity of glorifying God? The answer is summed up in S. Paul's phrase, by sorrowing "after a godly sort,"[1] that is, with reference to God. Let us consider a little more fully what this involves.

1. Godly sorrow is that which is borne with a real faith in God's wisdom and love in sending us the affliction, with a real belief that it is intended for our good, and therefore with an entire submission to God's holy will, and a complete surrender of ourselves

[1] 2 Cor. vii. 11.

into His loving hands, to bear patiently and trustfully the burden laid upon us.

2. Then there must be a reliance upon God the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, to give us strength to endure our trial, and to console us in our affliction. Sorrow is the furnace in which our nature is purified. But when ore is put into a furnace to be melted, it is not only put in under the earth, but the furnace is so arranged that a current of air may pass over it, that the wind, so to speak, may blow upon it. If this were not done, the ore would only be spoiled instead of being made ready for use. So it is with us. Suffering does not always sanctify souls. Sometimes its effect is the very reverse. If sorrow is to do its work in us it must be with the Holy Ghost breathing, as it were, through the furnace of affliction. The Holy Ghost is the wind of God, and that wind, as it were, creates the draught in the furnace of affliction which enables it to purify, not to spoil, to sanctify, not to harm, the soul of the sufferer. Often we find that suffering only hardens and spoils people. It is because they bear it without the help of the Holy Spirit. The saints are those who are sanctified by suffering because they endured, relying upon the Holy Ghost, the Sanctifier. They called to their aid the Advocate, the Comforter; and they found in His consolations strength to endure, and even the fruit of joy in their tribulation.

3. We must pray a great deal in our sorrow. Sorrow is meant to drive us to God in prayer, and

through prayer—not so much the utterance of our lips as the yearning of our wounded heart—sorrow does its work in refining our nature. But this prayer must be constant. The pain of the sorrow continues, and so must the spirit of prayer. Thus will sorrow do its work in binding the soul to God.

4. Lastly, there must be a clear grasp of the true relation between our suffering and the life of glory, as expressed by S. Paul: "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal."[1]

These words of the apostle are not merely a beautiful Christian sentiment, but a most important revelation. They teach us to co-ordinate, so to speak, the sorrows of earth with the glories of heaven, to remember that our sorrows are light—"light affliction"—not light in themselves, but light when compared with the overwhelming greatness of the glory of which they are the seed. Again, our afflictions are "but for a moment," not that they do not last many years, but that all lifetime is but a moment when co-ordinated with eternity. And, lastly, they are intended to work for us, that is, to produce in us, an "eternal weight of glory."

[1] 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18.

Sorrow and suffering develop the capacity for future glory, develop spiritual faculties which otherwise must remain dormant and useless. This development, however, depends upon our taking right views of our affliction, upon our grasping, as we have said, the relation between the sorrows of earth and the glories of heaven. And this S. Paul implies when he says that our afflictions only work that far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, "while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen." While we look at the things which are seen, that is, at the troubles of this world, they seem overwhelming and unbearable, and we sorrow after the manner of the world, with bitterness and gloom. But while we look at the things which are not seen, that is, at the glories of heaven, of which the sorrows of earth are in a sense the raw material, we see that they are not only bearable but light, and we rejoice in our tribulation. We learn to say with S. Paul in another place, "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."[1]

We cannot over-estimate the importance of grasping this great revelation in regard to sorrow, that it has a real relation to the life of glory, not merely that it weans us from the pleasures of this world and drives us to God, but that it sanctifies and refines our characters, making us meet, as nothing else can

[1] Rom. viii. 18.

make us meet, for the kingdom of God in eternity. This will not only rob sorrow of its sting but lead us to value sorrow at its true worth, and to thank God that we have learned to sow in tears that we may reap hereafter in joy.

To sum up, we may say that sorrow thus endured sanctifies the soul:

1. By the development of a Christ-like character. Character is developed by the forces to which we are subjected. By the forces of the world: pleasure, praise, success. These, as a rule, produce a proud and selfish spirit. Or character is developed by sorrow and suffering, through which we are made like the Man of Sorrows, and gain a Christ-like nature.

2. Then, again, sorrow develops sympathy and unselfishness, in that it helps us to realise the sufferings of others, and so should lead us to try to help them, even though their troubles are quite different from our own. There should be a fellowship of suffering, whatever be its nature. We have a great example of this in Joseph after he had passed through the furnace of suffering and sorrow as a slave in Potiphar's house, and as a victim to a false accusation in an Egyptian prison. Instead of being soured and hardened by his own sorrows, when he was exalted to the governorship of Egypt he shows his sympathy for the misfortunes of others, and sets to work actively to ameliorate the sufferings of the poor, caused by the great famine in Egypt. His

unselfish sympathy is rewarded, since through this his father and his brethren are restored to him, and his sorrow is turned into joy, a joy which lasted to the end of his life.

3. Sorrow has the effect of mellowing the character, and making us gentle and gracious. Perhaps we can all of us recall instances of this in friends who have drunk the cup of sorrow to the very dregs, and have been sanctified by it. They may not be light-hearted and joyous as others; indeed, they must necessarily look upon life very seriously; but through their pain they have learned self-control and patience, and have developed a gentle graciousness of manner, and a most real sympathy with the sorrows and sufferings of others.

To whom do we look for sympathy when we are in trouble but to the friends who, we know, have themselves passed through the furnace of affliction. Sympathy from those whose life is one long day of sunshine is little more than the utterance of well chosen words which convey small comfort, because we feel that they are not the outcome of an experience of sorrow like our own. But when friends who have suffered tell us that they too have passed through the vale of tears, and understand the poignancy of our grief, their words have a meaning which is altogether wanting in the condolence of those whose life has been all brightness.

4. The effects of sorrow in sanctifying the soul

may be most clearly traced in that sphere of our being which we call the spiritual life; for sorrow, as we have seen, not only weans us from the things of earth, but throws us, as it were, into the very arms of God, developing in us a great sense of nearness to God, a realisation of that union with Him which is the very essence of our spiritual life.

5. Such sorrow may be looked upon in two ways —as sacramental and sacrificial.

(i.) As regards ourselves, it is sacramental. It is in the furnace of affliction that our character is purified. The work may be slow but it is sure. Through the effects of sorrow our proud nature is gradually melted down to true humility; and this must take place before the work of grace in us can be perfected. There is much of dross in the best of us, which needs to be purged away before the virtues of a Christ-like life can really be formed in us; and these virtues are developed just in proportion as we are sacramentally united more and more to Christ.

The image of a furnace is frequently used in Holy Scripture to represent the work of sorrow and suffering in the soul. Now there are two furnaces specially used in connection with this figure: the potter's furnace, the kiln in which vessels of clay are baked, and the refiner's furnace, in which precious metals like silver and gold are refined. In both there seem to be three prominent ideas: the effects of the heat in changing the character of that which

is subjected to it; the beneficial result of this change; and the watchful care exercised by the potter or refiner.

The clay is quite useless until it has been baked and hardened. But it is necessary that the potter should supervise this process. If the heat were too intense, or the clay exposed to its operation too long, the vessel would be cracked and spoiled. On the other hand, if the heat were insufficient, or the vessel withdrawn too soon, it would be soft and useless. The potter has to watch the work, to temper the heat, and to withdraw the vessel at the right moment, all of which requires skilful care, and strikingly illustrates God's loving providence ordering our lives, subjecting us to such trials as are necessary for our sanctification; for God is faithful, Who will not suffer us to be tempted (tried) above that we are able.[1] The trial, however, is necessary, in order that we may be purged of the dross of our nature, and that the virtues of a Christ-like character may be developed in us.

We have a similar illustration in the figure of the refiner watching the precious metal in his crucible. It is not until it is melted that he can separate from it the alloy. And very often it is not until our nature has been, so to speak, melted in the furnace of affliction that the pride and other evil tendencies can be removed from us. We must never forget, however, that God is watching us in our sorrow,

[1] *Cf.* 1 Cor. x. 13.

tempering the afflictions to our strength, supplying us with grace to enable us to bear them, and that it is His purpose to bring us out of the affliction purified and made meet for His kingdom in heaven.

Sorrow and suffering, therefore, are sacramental in their wonderful effect upon the soul which bears them in reliance upon God's grace.

(ii.) As regards others, sorrow is sacrificial in that it has an almost redemptive power upon other souls. It was the sorrows and sufferings of our Lord that redeemed the world. And with most great reformers it has not been so much the eloquence of their preaching or the logic of their arguments as the sufferings which they endured, which have converted the world. Indeed, we may generally trace three stages in every great work of reformation: the stage of curiosity, when people have been attracted by the novelty of the teaching set forth. This has often been followed by a stage of persecution, as they have realised that the new teaching conflicted altogether with their own ideas, and involved the surrender of many prejudices. And this has given place to a third stage, that of martyrdom, when the baptism of blood has effected what neither eloquence nor argument could do, and has converted the people.

It was so in the most marked degree in our Blessed Lord's work. At first people heard Him gladly; then they persecuted Him; finally they

crucified Him. But His sufferings were sacrificial, and His blood redeemed the world. Far off, of course, in degree, yet similar in principle, has it been with many of our Lord's saints. They have been raised up at periods of great moral degeneracy to reform the Church. They have attracted attention, aroused curiosity. As this has died down persecution has taken its place—persecution which ended in martyrdom, a martyrdom which, however, produced its results in a reformation of the morals or beliefs of the age. To give but one instance, it was so with Savanarola. It has been so with many of God's people. The martyrdom has not always been that of actual bloodshed, but the sufferings have been sacrificial in their effect upon those who inflicted them; sacrificial too in their fellowship with the sufferings of Christ, from which they have gained their merit.

To the superficial thinker the vicarious suffering of Christ has ever been a stumbling-block, something irreconcilable with his view of justice. And yet is not the Passion, which redeemed the world, rather the climax of that method of operation to which may be traced all the progress of humanity? For man's sorrows, not his joys, are the seed both of the glory of the life to come and of many blessings to humanity in the life on earth.

When we try to trace the fruit which has sprung from the legacy of pleasure and joy left to us by the individuals of the race, how little do we find!

Pleasure and joy seem to be a seed which is sterile and unproductive. All the abundant fruit of the experience of centuries has sprung from seed sown in tears, the seed of labour, sorrow, and pain.

CHAPTER VI.

The Sorrow of Bereavement.

In this chapter we come to the last but to the greatest of all earthly sorrows — the sorrow of bereavement. Loss of fortune or reputation may be repaired; injury may be forgiven; pain and sickness endured. But the loss by death of the one dearest to us on earth, dearer, perhaps, far than our own life, is a sorrow for which there is no cure, a sorrow which, though time and God's grace may alleviate its poignancy, we shall yet carry to the grave.

What does the sorrow of bereavement involve? It is the taking out from our life its joy. It is the continuing, overwhelming sense of loss and utter loneliness. To live on and on without the one we loved so well; to miss the familiar step which told of his approach, the loving cheery voice which awakened responsive echoes in our heart, the sympathetic ear ever ready to listen to our sorrows, the intercourse with the mind which was in such perfect accord with ours, which delighted in the same interests; and then, as the first anguish gives

place to a dull consciousness of loss, only to realise more and more each day what it is to be alone in this great world. It is the greatest of all human sorrows ; and yet it is one of those which is common to man : for the hand of death spares no one, and sooner or later rends apart the closest unions which man can know on earth. Like all sorrows, its intensity is proportioned by the capacity of the mourner to suffer, and the closeness of our union with the one we have lost.

The sorrow of bereavement cannot be classified merely as the loss of husband or wife, of parent or child, because, alas ! there are husbands and wives who have never known that perfect oneness of life which is possible only where holy matrimony is lived according to God's ordinance. So, too, there are parents and children between whom the bond of affection is but light. But we are thinking to-day of the sorrows of bereavement in those few ideal cases where the union has been perfect, and the bond of love stronger even than death.

How little consolation can anyone offer in such a case ! And yet it may be of value to point out that the sorrow of bereavement, like certain diseases of the body, has its laws and must run its course. So that, perhaps, the best help is to warn the mourner of this, and to suggest, not cures or remedies for this sorrow (for there are none), but rather to point out certain principles, the realisation of which will aid the sufferer to turn the sorrow, as God intends

it, to good account, that it may become a means of developing his character and sanctifying his soul.

There are certain diseases of the body and certain sorrows of the soul with which we are familiar in the sense that we know that many individuals suffer from them. We read, for instance, of an epidemic of typhoid fever; we hear of friends dying of pneumonia; and we realise that these are terrible diseases. But, although we *know* that we *may* be the next victim, we somehow expect to escape, and regard the danger in a very different way from the man whose physician has just told him that he has typhoid fever or pneumonia, and therefore that his life is in grave peril. Similarly we read in the newspapers each day the record of those who have died. We know that in many cases they have left behind sorrowing husbands or wives or parents or children. But this is a very different thing from ourselves experiencing the sorrow of bereavement.

Let us, then, begin with the recognition of the fact that our sorrow, intense as it is, is not peculiar. It is one of those sufferings which is common to man. It is a sickness of soul, through which many have passed, a sickness which involves terrible anguish, but which must run its course. The world's nostrums—change of scene, excitement, work—while they may be effective where the sorrow is merely emotional or superficial, are of little help to the true mourner. Indeed, they leave him not better, but much worse for having

tried them. The physician who diagnoses his patient's case as typhoid or pneumonia, knows that it cannot be arrested or broken up, that medicines are of little value, and that all that can be done is to help nature to endure the disease, and, when its force is spent, then carefully to aid in the work of building up again the system. So is it with the sorrow of bereavement. The pain has to be endured, and the most we can do is to supply certain reflections which may help us to counteract the special temptations which belong to this state—temptations, for instance, to rebel against God's providence.

Our first step must be to reflect upon the character of God, that God is love. For some wise purpose God has suffered this great trial to befall us; but God is love. To think for one moment of God as hard or cruel is not only wicked, but it is untrue. God cannot be cruel, because God is love. The very expression involves a contradiction in terms. Our Father in heaven knows our suffering, permits it; in a sense, may be said to have sent it to us, but in love. We must not seek to know the reason why it has happened, because God's ways are inscrutable. If we could understand them, God would not be inscrutable, and therefore would not be God. We must rest upon the foundation truth that our God is love, that we are His children whom He has afflicted with grievous chastisement, but that the

chastisement is ultimately for our good. We know this, though we cannot explain it. We cannot point out in what way it is so. But we believe that God is omnipotent, omniscient, and that He is love. He therefore knows our sorrows, He can help us to the uttermost in bearing them, and He has sent them because He loves us.

From this it will follow that we must trust God even though at the time of our desolation we cry with Christ upon the Cross, "My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" We must cling to Him as our God. We must say, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in Him."[1] And what does this trust imply? First the acceptance of the cross which God has laid upon us, a real and loving submission to His holy will. Then a belief that though all now is so dark, God will bring us through this valley of the shadow of death into the light of His presence; that though He lays upon us a heavy cross He will give us grace to bear it, and will make it the instrument of our sanctification. We must not, therefore, wish to be rid of the pain; we must not ask that it may be taken away; but rather pray for grace to bear it lovingly, that it may do its work in the sanctification of our nature.

Then, after we have meditated on God's essential character, after we have really brought home to our soul the conviction that He is love, and therefore have come to put our trust in Him, we must have

[1] Job xiii. 15.

recourse to prayer. We ought to spend a great part of our time on our knees; literally on our knees if we can, but if this is not possible, at least in the spirit of prayer, not necessarily saying many words or using any form, but in those groanings of the spirit which, while they find no utterance in human words, reach the throne of grace. Put yourselves with Christ in Gethsemane. Think of the sorrows that gathered around Him there. The agony in the Garden, the sweat of blood, was not caused by any pain of body, for not yet had He been scourged or crucified. It was the sorrows of the sacred Soul of Jesus which caused His agony, and being in agony He prayed more earnestly. The word agony, as you know, signifies a great struggle, a great conflict, in which all the faculties of our nature take part. When Christ was suffering His agony, He prayed more earnestly. In our agony of sorrow we must follow His example, and if we cannot find words to express our feelings we must lift up our soul to God in intense longing for help to bear the cross which God has laid upon us, for power not only to say, "Thy will be done," but for the will to do God's will.

It may, perhaps, help us in our prayers to take verses from the Psalms and to paraphrase them, to translate them so to speak into our own experience. As an example let us take Psalm lxxxvi.:

"Bow down thine ear, O Lord, and hear me: for I am poor, and in misery." Pity my weakness, O

Lord; and since by reason of my sorrow I cannot lift up my soul to Thee as I would, bow down Thine ear to me. In Thy mercy, stoop, as it were, to listen to my feeble prayer, and send help to me: for I am poor and in misery; poor in spirit, and in the deepest misery of grief.

"Preserve thou my soul, for I am holy: my God, save Thy servant that putteth his trust in Thee." Preserve my soul from the enemy who will use my despondency as an opportunity for tempting me to wrong thoughts, as an occasion for suggesting doubts of Thy goodness and pity. Preserve my soul, for I desire to be holy. Therefore I pray Thee, by Thy grace to save me from the temptations with which the evil one is sure to assault me.

"Be merciful unto me, O Lord: for I will call daily upon Thee." Lord, I know that this sorrow will not soon pass away; therefore I resolve daily to call upon Thee for help to enable me to bear it rightly. Do Thou have mercy upon me, and hear my prayer.

"Comfort the soul of Thy servant: for unto Thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul." There is no consolation in the world. There is little help even in the sympathy of kind friends. There is only one Comforter, and Him I call to my aid, the Holy Ghost. May He pour the oil of His consolation into my wounded soul, bringing me strength and peace in my sorrow.

"For Thou, Lord, art good and gracious: and of

great mercy unto all them that call upon Thee." How often in my past life have I known Thy goodness! Thy mercy has followed me all my days. Be gracious unto me now in the time of my great distress.

"Give ear, Lord, unto my prayer: and ponder the voice of my humble desires. In the time of my trouble I will call upon Thee: for Thou hearest me."

There are many of the Psalms which we might use in this way; among them we may mention Psalms xxiii., xxvii., lv., lxix., cxxx., cxlii., and cxliii.

Constantly try to offer your sufferings to God in union with our Lord's sorrow in Gethsemane and on the Cross of Calvary. Remember that "for the joy that was set before Him [He] endured the cross, despising the shame,"[1] and therefore, following His example, look forward to the joyous fruits of your sorrow in the sanctification of your nature to the glory of God. The fruit is long in coming. We sow in tears, but a long period must elapse before we can reap in joy. Some of the harvest we may gather in during this life, but the great harvest of joy belongs to the life to come, in the union with those whom we love, in the joy of God's presence in heaven.

Holy Scripture is full of promises for the future, though suffering may be our lot in the present. Indeed, it is striking that the great promises of

[1] Heb. xii. 2.

consolation have more to do with the future than the immediate present, even though we may seem now to need consolation so much. In our Lord's great Beatitude, "Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted,"[1] the promise of comfort is in the future. Christ does not say, "Happy are they that mourn: for they *are* comforted," but in God's good time they *shall* be comforted. So S. Peter prays for his flock, "The God of all grace, Who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, *after* that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you."[2] He does not pray that the suffering may be taken away, but after it has done its work that the consolation and strength may come. And there are many, very many similar passages in Holy Scripture.[3] They all lead us to the one great truth, that affliction has to do its work before consolation is given. The seed sown in tears has to grow like any other seed, *secretly*, not while men watch; but it does grow, and at last brings forth first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear.[4]

Above all we must sorrow in faith, and hope, and love. In faith that it is God's hand that is upon us; in faith that he whom we have lost shall rise again. For our Lord said to Martha, sorrowing for her brother Lazarus, "Whosoever liveth and believeth

[1] S. Matt. v. 4. [2] 1 S. Pet. v. 10.
[3] *Cf.* Ps. xl. 1; Heb. xii, 11; Ps. xxvii. 14, &c.
[4] *Cf.* S. Mark iv. 26-30.

in Me shall never die;" "Thy brother shall rise again."[1] Then hope; as S. Paul exhorts us, "I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope."[2] Hope, that those which sleep in Jesus God will bring with Him; hope for that great re-union with those we love; hope for comfort here and great joy hereafter. But remember that hope is exercised and developed through prayer. Endure, therefore, your sorrow, with prayer until sorrow gives place to a great peace, a wonderful sanctification which shall prepare your soul for re-union with the blessed ones who have gone before, re-union in that kingdom of love in eternity, where there shall be no more parting, no more sorrow because there shall be no more death.

[1] S. John xi. 26, 23. [2] 1 Thess. iv. 13.

CHAPTER VII.

The Hope of Immortality.

TWO great subjects press upon us in time of bereavement: one which concerns ourselves exclusively, the purpose of the sorrow which God has sent us, and how we may best use it for our sanctification; the other concerns the dear one we have lost—what are we to believe and hope in regard to his present and future condition? The first question, regarding the sorrows of bereavement as they affect ourselves, we have considered at some length. But S. Paul tells us that he would not have us to be ignorant concerning them which are asleep, that we sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.[1] Let us, therefore, pass from the subject of sorrow to an examination of the character and grounds of our hope; and this will require on our part an investigation of the present and future state of the faithful departed. Such an investigation must always be most interesting, whether we have regard to the condition of those we have loved and lost or to the fact that some day we shall ourselves pass into that spirit-world beyond.

[1] *Cf.* 1 Thess. iv. 13.

Lest any should esteem it presumption to inquire into the mysteries of the intermediate state, we may point to S. Paul's words which seem to inculcate it as a duty; for he says, "I would not have you to be ignorant concerning them which are asleep"; therefore we may infer that he would have us diligently use the means at our disposal to acquire all the knowledge possible in regard to the state of the soul after death. We must, of course, bear in mind that God has seen fit to shroud this subject in mystery, and we must not strive to be wise above that which is revealed. We shall, however, probably be surprised to find how many hints are given us in Holy Scripture, and how convincing are many of the inferences which have been drawn from them.

To begin at the beginning, we must observe that faith in a future life finds expression in every age and race. There is no people so ancient or so uncivilised that they do not in some way bear witness to a belief in a life beyond the grave. Among savage tribes the common custom of burying food with the body points to this; for the food is intended to symbolize that which is needed to sustain existence in that other world to which the spirit has gone. Similarly, among some Indians the horse and dog of the warrior are slain with him, the idea being that he will need their spirits in the happy hunting-ground to which he has gone. A belief in the immortality of the soul and of its re-union with the body is most strikingly expressed in the religion

of the Egyptians, while among the Greeks and Romans there was the clearest evidence, not only of existence after death, but of mutual recognition in the spirit-world.

In Plato's touching account of the defence Socrates uttered before his judges, the philosopher ends with these striking words: "The hour of departure has arrived, and we go our ways: I to die and you to live. Which is better God only knows." The passage which precedes this shows that Socrates believed not only in a life beyond the grave, but expected to recognise those who had preceded him; for he says: "What would not a man give if he might converse with Orpheus and Musaeus, Hesiod and Homer. Nay, if this be true, let me die again and again. I myself, too, shall have a wonderful interest in there meeting and conversing with Palamedes and Ajax, the son of Telamon, and other heroes of old. . . . Above all I shall then be able to continue my search into true and false knowledge. . . . In another world they do not put a man to death for asking questions. Assuredly not. For, besides being happier in that world than in this, they will be immortal, if what is said is true."[1]

Socrates lived in the fifth century before Christ. Virgil and Horace, who lived only a generation before our Lord, alike bear witness to a faith in the immortality of the soul and in mutual recognition

[1] Plato, "Apologia," 41, 42.

in the spirit-world—Horace in his famous phrase says: "I shall not wholly die; and a great part of me shall escape the grave";[1] while Virgil, in the sixth book of the "Aeneid," records the descent of Aeneas to Avernus and his meeting there with his father, Anchises, and others.[2]

If any should object that these beliefs and customs are the result of superstition only, we may point out that reason itself leads us to the same conclusion; for there are innate in human nature certain fundamental ideas from which others are deduced, which constitute man's reason. We find, for instance, in every man a recognition of the difference between good and evil, and therefore the existence of the natural faculty of conscience. If we ask a man if he is a responsible being, even an unbeliever would answer that all men are responsible, except such as have not the gift of reason. If you further inquire to whom he is responsible or accountable, if he be a Christian, he will answer you, To God; if he be an unbeliever, he will find it very difficult to reply to your question. If he says he is responsible to the state or to society, it is evident that the state and society only take cognisance of overt acts, and of these only of such as injure society, not necessarily of those which are intrinsically wrong. Man's conscience, however, does not tell him that a

[1] "Non omnis moriar: multaque pars mei. Vitabit Libitinam."—*Hor.*

[2] Virgil, "Aeneid," Lib. vi, 260 et seq.

thing is wrong because it will injure society, but that many things are intrinsically wrong even though they injure nobody. Indeed, as has often been pointed out, the admission that man is a responsible being leads necessarily to a tribunal before which he must give an account, not only of his actions, but of his thoughts and words; and, as no such tribunal exists in this world, there must be a future life in which that account will be rendered before the judgment-seat of God.

We may pass, however, from the testimony of natural religion and philosophy to the witness of revelation. We shall find that, like most truths of religion, the revelation of the future life was gradual. Among the patriarchs there is but little reference to it, though the frequent phrase, "They were gathered to their fathers," clearly points both to a future world and to a re-union there with those who had gone before. We are told of Enoch, indeed, that he "walked with God: and he was not; for God took him,"[1] which certainly seems to imply an existence with God after he left this world. When we come to the age of David we find scattered throughout the Psalter many references to the future life, some which describe it as a place of darkness, others with greater hope. For example, we read, "For in death no man remembereth Thee: and who will give Thee thanks in the pit?"[2] And again, "What profit is there in my blood: when I go

[1] Gen. v. 24. [2] Ps. vi. 5.

down to the pit? Shall the dust give thanks unto Thee: or shall it declare Thy truth?"[1] And again, "Shall Thy wondrous works be known in the dark: and Thy righteousness in the land where all things are forgotten?"[2]

On the other hand, we find many passages which show that the Psalmist had learned to "sorrow not, even as others which have no hope." First, of course, we must place that passage which S. Peter says David spake concerning Christ: "I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for He is on my right hand, that I should not be moved: therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope: because Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; Thou shalt make me full of joy with Thy countenance."[3] Then in the following Psalm we have the striking act of faith, "But as for me, I will behold Thy presence in righteousness: and when I awake up after Thy likeness, I shall be satisfied with it."[4]

When we come to the prophets the revelation of a future life becomes clearer. Isaiah proclaims: "Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise";[5] and Hosea prophesies, "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will

[1] Ps. xxx. 9-10. [2] Ps. lxxxviii. 12.
[3] Acts ii. 25-28; *cf.* Ps. xvi. 8-12. [4] Ps. xvii. 16.
[5] Is. xxvi. 19.

redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction";[1] and Daniel tells us that "Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt."[2] While in the later apocryphal age we find in the book of Maccabees that it was the custom to pray for the dead; for Judas Maccabeus, "When he had made a gathering throughout the company to the sum of two thousand drachms of silver, he sent it to Jerusalem to offer a sin offering, doing therein very well and honestly, in that he was mindful of the resurrection: for if he had not hoped that they that were slain should have risen again, it had been superfluous and vain to pray for the dead. And also in that he perceived that there was great favour laid up for those that died godly, it was an holy and good thought. Whereupon he made a reconciliation for the dead, that they might be delivered from sin."[3]

When, however, we turn to the New Testament we find there most clearly taught by our Lord Himself the doctrine of a future life. The two most familiar passages are the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, and the episode of the penitent robber upon the cross. To the latter our Lord promises, "To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise"; while in the former, under parabolic imagery, Christ teaches that in the spirit-world there is a separation between the

[1] Hos. xiii. 14. [2] Dan. xii. 2. [3] 2 Maccab. xii. 43-45.

good and the evil, for the rich man is represented as being in torments and Lazarus as resting in Abraham's bosom. In the words addressed to the penitent robber our Lord clearly reveals to us the personal identity between the life here and the life in Paradise. He does not say, Thy soul or thy spirit shall be with My soul or My spirit, but He says, Thou shall be with Me; thou, the penitent sinner, shall be with Me, thy Lord and Saviour. Surely, too, these words imply companionship, and therefore recognition.

If we turn back to the parable of the rich man and Lazarus we find there represented the ordinary Rabbinical teaching of our Lord's time—that at the moment of death the soul enters upon a state in which the wicked are punished and the righteous rewarded. Sheol was the word used by the Jews for the intermediate state. Its Greek equivalent in the New Testament is Hades. This was divided into Gehenna and Abraham's bosom. While it is not necessary to press all the imagery of a parable as though it were an utterance of dogmatic truth; yet we must remember that the imagery used by our Lord is intended to transmit truth, and the fact that He adopted the ordinary theological terms current among the Jews of His day shows that they at least conveyed substantial truths. Had they conveyed error, Christ would have corrected it or would not have used them.

Stripping the parable, however, of all its imagery,

we certainly find two clearly revealed facts in it; that the life in the spirit-world is personally *identical* with the life we have lived here and has a real *continuity* with it. The rich man was the same individual. The habits he had formed, the character he had developed continued in Hades; and he was held responsible for and punished for the sins he had committed in this world. Similarly, Lazarus retains his personality: for he is still Lazarus, and he is rewarded, we are distinctly told, for the patience with which he had endured the sufferings of his life here.

Our Blessed Lord in many other passages speaks of the future life, of the punishment of hell fire and of the reward of heaven. These are most strikingly contrasted in the great parable of the judgment, in which the King says to those on His right hand, "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world"; and to those on the left hand, "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels," adding, "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."[1]

It is scarcely necessary to point out in the Acts of the Apostles and in the Epistles and the Book of Revelation how frequently and how fully the hope of immortality is set before us. In the

[1] S. Matt. xxv. 34, 41, 46.

lesson in the Burial Service of our Church we are familiarised with S. Paul's argument both for the fact and for the character of the resurrection of the dead. In his Epistles to the Thessalonians we have much eschatalogical teaching, and everywhere throughout the New Testament we may say that there is the clearest revelation of a future life, in which every man shall receive his reward according as his work shall be.[1]

[1] *Cf.* S. Matt. xvi. 27 ; Rev. xxii. 12.

CHAPTER VIII.

Our Condition after Death.

WHAT is death? There are few things in this life more familiar than death. It is all around us. We know that at every breath we draw, some souls are being set free from the body by death. It is the goal of our own life, the one thing which can be predicted of us with absolute certainty. From the moment that we are born it may be prophesied of us that we shall die. Whether we shall be rich or poor, whether we shall be happy or miserable, whether we shall become good or evil, whether we shall be learned or ignorant, whether we shall make life a success or a failure, whether we shall live long or but a few years no one can foretell; but one thing is absolutely certain: we shall die. Yet, strange to say, if we are asked what is death, we find it difficult to give an answer to the question.

We may use the well-worn definition that death is the cessation of life, that is, of physical life; but, if this definition is to have any meaning to us, we must evidently know what physical life is, and that no one even pretends to know. Life and death,

the two most familiar facts in existence, are two great mysteries, always near us and yet never fully understood until we look back upon them from another world. We may say with some confidence that physical death consists in the separation of the body and soul, and therefore the dissolution of their vital union; that it is the beginning in the body of those processes of disintegration by which it returns to dust.

But what effect has death upon the soul? What will be our condition five minutes after death? A change will have taken place so tremendous that we can scarcely conceive of all that it involves. The change will not be in my personality nor in my character, but in the conditions under which my life goes on. Let us, then, turn our attention now to these conditions so far as we may gather them from physical facts with which we are acquainted, from hints which are given us in revelation, and from inferences which we can draw from these two sources.

The effect of death upon the body we know well—that the body decays and crumbles into dust and passes into other bodies. But how does this affect the soul? Probably few persons have really tried to think this out. There will be a dissolution and collapse of all that goes to make up our physical life here. In the first place, the senses, through which all our knowledge of the outer world is acquired, will cease to exist. The senses have been styled the

windows of the soul. Through them we look out, as it were, upon the world around us. When they are taken away how shall we see without eyes? how can we hear without the organs of hearing? how can we think without a brain? Revelation is quite clear in teaching us that our life after death will be a conscious life; and a conscious life implies thought and something corresponding to sight and hearing.

We are accustomed to speak of our senses as five: sight, hearing, taste, smell, and touch; five organs through which we receive perceptions of external things. And yet, when we examine them, we find that they may be reduced to one—the sense of *touch*—since sight is produced by the vibrations of the luminiferous ether upon the eye and optic nerve; sound, by the pulsations of the atmosphere upon the ear drum and aural nerve; smell apparently by the contact of oderiferous particles with the nerves in the nasal passages; taste by the contact of certain sapid things with the palate. But all these are evidently the effect of *touch* upon different nerves which carry different messages to the brain.

It is difficult for us to realise that these effects must be produced after death without the existence of any of the organs through which they are caused during physical life. We shall see without eyes, hear without ears, think without brains. If we ask, how can these things be? we can only give a very partial answer by pointing out that even in this life, seeing and hearing and thinking do not depend only upon

the organs which we use, since at the moment after death the eye and ear and brain are perfect in all their parts, but they have become dissociated from the soul. It was, however, never these organs which saw and heard and thought, but *ourselves.* They, through the sense of touch, conveyed in some wonderful way the message from the outer world, but the message was not merely to the brain. There was something behind the brain, which we speak of when we say, "I see," "I hear," "I think." After death the "I" remains, though it has lost all the various channels through which it received communications from without. The outer world continues to exist as we continue to exist, but there must be some other media of communication, of which we have little cognisance during our life here.

When we were born into this world we possessed the germs of certain faculties, which were latent, but gradually were developed. A little child has a child's brain, containing the germ which may grow into the fully developed brain of the man. But the little child cannot reason and does not at first think. As it grows, the brain develops, and feeds upon the stores of knowledge which are external to it, and through which it gradually builds up certain treasures of knowledge within itself. Behind this process, however, is the potential faculty of thinking, which has to be exercised and gradually developed ; and in proportion as this faculty is trained and exercised it becomes able in mature life to produce wonderful results.

The great thinkers of the world in all departments of knowledge, have been men and women who have first had what we call natural ability, that is, potential germs of the intellectual faculty, which, by careful training and exercise, have so developed that they have been enabled to attain to great results. Similarly in this world we are all endowed with the germs of certain spiritual faculties, which it is our work to train by evolving our latent spiritual powers through exercise upon spiritual things. S. Paul tells us that, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. . . . . But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."[1]

Here, then, in revelation we have a clear recognition of certain endowments which are supernatural, and which, while developed in this world, are evidently to find their perfect sphere of action in the world beyond. So that we may say that a new series of faculties potentially existing and partially developed in this life, comes into play in the life of the disembodied soul in the world beyond.

Again S. Paul tells us, "That if our earthly house of this tabernacle (tent-dwelling) were dissolved, we

[1] 1 Cor. ii., 9, 10, 14.

have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house, which is from heaven"—literally, to put on over this dwelling our house. "If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked" (rather, seeing that we shall be indeed found clothed [with a body] not naked). "For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life."[1]

This passage presents serious difficulties, and is generally referred to that life of glory after the resurrection when we shall have put on our resurrection body. There are, however, many who decline to confine it to this interpretation, and point out that it distinctly denies that we are at any time naked, unclothed or without any body; for S. Paul says, "Seeing that we shall indeed be found clothed (with a body), not naked."

Without pressing this too far we may call attention to the fact that, so far as revelation indicates, the disembodied soul is not shapeless or unrecognisable; for when departed spirits have been seen by those on earth, apparently they had bodies which were recognised as like their earthly bodies. Samuel was thus recognised by Saul after his death; Moses and Elias on the Mount of Transfiguration by the disciples; the Holy Angels by those chosen saints of God to whom

[1] 2 Cor. v. 1-5.

they appeared. From this it would seem probable that, in putting off this mortal body, we are at once clothed with some sort of spirit-body which is recognisable, and which is the instrument of the disembodied soul; so that after death the spirit is invested with new powers of vitality and energy, powers which are fitted to its new environment

Our mortal bodies are of the earth earthy, in the sense that they are formed of certain chemical particles which are derived from this material world. These particles are taken into our bodies by means of food, and through the processes of digestion are assimilated to the various organs which are thus built up in us. A chemist, however, though he may get together all the various ingredients which go to make up our bodies, cannot produce one single organ, since the material particles have to be acted upon by the vital forces which build up the organism, every part of which, so far at least as it is appreciable by the senses, is material. We can dissect the eye, and we can reduce it by analysis to its various chemical properties. Having done so, however, we can by no earthly skill reproduce an eye from those material ingredients. But, perhaps, in the spirit-world the disembodied soul will be able to build up, out of the spirit substances which form its environment there, a spirit-body through which it manifests its various activities.

Another question which suggests itself is, of what nature are the new objects of sight and hearing? Of

what does the spiritual world into which we enter consist? This question we must leave unanswered, or at best with a very partial answer, since, as we have seen, revelation tells us that, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." We may say, without much hesitation, that the environment of the disembodied soul will be a spiritual environment, which will give room for the exercise of those spiritual faculties of the soul which have been developed in our life here.

In the passage of S. Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians just quoted, the apostle goes on to tell us that "The Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." Then he further warns us that, "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

By the natural man S. Paul means man dominated by the animal soul as distinguished from the man under the influence of the higher spiritual soul. The word translated "natural" is our word psychical. All men come under this description. But man possesses a higher spiritual part which, in proportion as it is developed and asserts itself, renders the man *spiritual.*

So that the conflict in this life is largely to determine the supremacy of these parts.

S. Paul, speaking of the body, tells us that it is sown a natural body (psychical), and that it is raised a spiritual body, by which we may understand that the body, so long as we live in this world, is more or less under the rule of the lower animal soul, but that when we are raised from the dead, after having passed through a state of purification in the world beyond, the resurrection or glorified body will be so entirely dominated by the Spirit that it will be a spiritual body.

CHAPTER IX.

The Human Trichotomy.

At this point it is necessary that we should examine somewhat carefully what Holy Scripture teaches us concerning our own tripartite nature.

We have a *body* linked to the material world, of which it is the flower and crown. We have a *spirit* through which we have fellowship with that higher spiritual world, of which the angels are representatives and Jesus is the King. We have also a human *soul;* and in this we are absolutely unique, for the lower animals have bodies in many respects like our own, and the angels are pure spirits, but man, and man only, possesses the soul which constitutes him a human being. This is clearly S. Paul's teaching; for in his prayer for the Thessalonians he uses the following words: "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.[1]

While we cannot ignore this trichotomy of body, soul, and spirit, we must be careful to observe that

[1] 1 Thess. v. 23.

the divisions are not co-ordinate. Theologians have generally preferred to teach a dichotomy dividing man into body and soul, into a material and immaterial part. The immaterial part, however, is capable of sub-division into soul and spirit, although both are often included under the term soul. That there is, however, a very real distinction between them is obvious from the passage in the Hebrews: "For the word of God is quick (living), and powerful (active), and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit."[1]

We may notice two things here—that it is possible to distinguish between soul and spirit, and yet that the relation which exists between them is very close; for while we are told that the Word of God does divide or distinguish between soul and spirit, it is implied that the union between them is so close that it needs an instrument like the Word of God, living, and powerful, and sharper than a two-edged sword, to effect this division.

In the Epistle to the Galatians we read, "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would."[2] Here S. Paul seems to imply that the human soul is the debatable ground, the battle-field of life, for the control of

[1] Heb. iv. 12. [2] Gal. v. 16-17.

which the spiritual and carnal elements in man are in continual conflict. In another Epistle we have similar teaching, where he says, "I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members."[1]

These considerations will enable us to understand better what S. Paul means in the passage quoted in the last chapter: "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

We have already pointed out that the word natural in the original is psychical. S. Paul uses this word four times in the first Epistle to the Corinthians, and we find it in two other passages in the New Testament.[2] In every passage in the Corinthians it is translated by our word "natural," but in the other two passages by "sensual." The natural or psychical man, therefore, is the man dominated by the things of sense, by the lower animal soul. The spiritual man, on the other hand, is he who, by restraining the desires of the lower nature, has rendered it obedient to the commands of the spirit, that spirit being under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

To illustrate our meaning we may picture human nature as a vast and intricate piece of machinery, capable of immense results for good or evil, but

[1] Rom. vii. 23. [2] S. James iii. 15; S. Jude 19.

depending for its motive power on something outside of itself. This may be applied from above, the Holy Spirit with His Sevenfold Gifts working upon our *spirit*, and enabling it to gain possession of the *soul*, and thus controlling the body as the servant of the soul. The result of this issues, as S. Paul tells us, in the fruit of the Spirit, "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance."[1] Or the motive power may be applied from below, the body through the channels of the senses drawing up into itself the lower world, then gaining possession of the soul and becoming its master instead of its slave, and then by mortal sin cutting the whole nature off from God. The result of this issues, as S. Paul shows us, in the works of the flesh, adultery, fornication, &c.[2]

At the moment of death the particular judgment takes place, by which the destiny of the soul is determined; that is, whether it be so dominated by the lower nature as to be incapable of the joys of heaven, or whether, though perhaps far from perfect, the spirit life has been begun and can be developed in the intermediate state, so that the body, which at death was but a psychical body, at the resurrection becomes absolutely spiritual. From this we learn the immense importance in this life of developing those spiritual faculties with which we are endowed, and by the exercise of which we are fitted for our environment in the world to

[1] Gal. v. 22-23. [2] Gal. v. 19-21.

come: that is, for our environment first in the intermediate state and afterwards in heaven.

Here we may take up again the question which we asked and partially answered in the last chapter: Of what nature are the new objects of sight and hearing? Of what does the spiritual world into which we enter consist? We shall have there as our companions other spiritual beings, angels and holy souls; but that our environment in that world will transcend altogether our present power to express in words, we may gather from the testimony of those in Holy Scripture who alone were capable of describing it—capable of describing it, that is, in the sense that they had seen the wonders of the spirit-world and the glories of heaven, and yet they were incapable of describing it since they could find no human terms to convey that which absolutely transcends human speech to utter and human thought to conceive.

It will be interesting to examine the testimony of those to whom the spirit-world had been unveiled. It falls into three classes: the testimony of those whom our Blessed Lord had raised from the dead—the daughter of Jairus, the widow's son at Nain, and Lazarus; of those who had been caught up in the spirit into heaven—S. Paul and S. John; and of our Lord Himself, to Whom the spirit-world was more familiar even than the world in which he sojourned for the brief period of His earthly life.

1.—If we take first those whom Christ raised from

the dead, what do they tell us—the ruler's child, the widow's son, and Lazarus? Absolutely nothing. And yet we may be sure that many friends must have pressed them to reveal the secrets of the unseen. Tell us, they must have said, what were your experiences after death? Of what character was your environment in the intermediate state? Whom did you meet there? What did they say to you? But apparently there was no reply. Had there been, we may be quite sure that tradition would have preserved some account of it, even though that account might have been exaggerated or distorted. But there is not one word.

Poets have striven to depict the altered view of this life which those held who had seen the life beyond. Few more striking conceptions of this can be found than in Browning's Epistle from the Arab physician, Karshish, who has met Lazarus and conversed with him, and writes an account of his impressions to his master Abib. Others have depicted how Lazarus smiled when others wept, and wept when others smiled, took little interest in the tremendous events which were transpiring around him, was deeply engrossed in things which to others seemed of little moment, lived indeed as one who realised the vanity of all things here except to serve God and do His will. Yet none have presumed to suggest that Lazarus ever attempted to describe what he had seen in the world beyond the grave. Some have thought that these things were blotted

from his memory; others that he could find no human words adequate to convey any conception of them; others, again, that a command had been laid upon him to keep silence about them.

2.—S. Paul and S. John were caught up in the spirit into heaven. And what do we learn from them? S. Paul says, "I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth); such an one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth); how that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter."[1] The third heaven and paradise are generally supposed to describe the same place, heaven itself. There S. Paul heard "unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter."

The Greek for "unspeakable words"[2] implies mysteries which may not be revealed, rather than things which cannot be described; and this is strengthened by the expression, "which it is not lawful for a man to utter." Apparently the discipline of silence was imposed upon S. Paul in regard to this vision. The vision was vouchsafed to him for his own edification, perhaps to enable him to bear better the thorn in the flesh, of which he proceeds to tell us, but not for the purpose of teaching the Church concerning the glories of heaven.

[1] 2 Cor. xii. 2-4. [2] (ἄρρητα ῥήματα).

In the case of S. John the object of his vision was different. It was for the edification of the Church, not merely for his own personal encouragement. But how does he proceed to describe it? By the use of human symbolism almost entirely drawn from visions of the older prophets, Ezekiel, Zechariah, and others. Of S. Paul we are told that it was not lawful for him to utter the words that were spoken to him in heaven. S. John rather implies that it is not possible to find human language adequate to depict the things he saw, to describe the things he heard; that they were unspeakable in the sense of exceeding the powers of human speech to reveal.

We may notice that in our translation the word "unspeakable" occurs three times in the New Testament, but each time it represents a different Greek word. Our Lord is called God's "*unspeakable* gift"[1] to man, where the Greek implies something which passes the power of the human mind and tongue to describe. As we have already pointed out, when S. Paul says that he heard "*unspeakable* words" in paradise,[2] the term unspeakable suggests a mystery, the revelation of which is forbidden. S. Peter speaks of the joy in believing as "joy *unspeakable* and full of glory,"[3] and here again the word means unutterable, surpassing the power of the human tongue to reveal. In all these senses we may say that the glory of the unseen

[1] 2 Cor. ix. 15 (ἀνεκδιηγήτῳ). [2] 2 Cor. xii. 4 (ἄρρητα ῥήματα).
[3] 1 S. Peter i. 8 (ἀνεκλαλήτῳ).

world is unspeakable. It was not permitted to those who had seen it to reveal it to us. Probably it was not possible for them to do it. Human thought could not conceive or human lips adequately reveal the splendours and mysteries of the life beyond the grave.

3.—Our Blessed Lord twice refers to the intermediate state: in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, and in His words to the penitent robber upon the cross; but in both cases He does little more than set His seal to the substantial truth of the Jewish conception of that state in His day.

The common term used to describe it *as a whole* was the Hebrew "Sheol," the equivalent of the Greek "Hades." This word He uses when He speaks of the rich man as being in hell. That part which was the abode of the souls of the just was called sometimes Abraham's bosom, sometimes paradise. Our Lord, we observe, uses both terms. He, however, tells us but little more than the Jewish theology of His time in regard to the state of the souls in the spirit-world.

While we must not press parabolic imagery as though it was equivalent to dogmatic truth, yet we must remember that He Who was the Truth could not have used this imagery unless it conveyed to His hearers substantial truth. If the Jews had been in error in regard to the state of departed souls, it is quite inconceivable that our Blessed Lord would have endorsed that error by adopting language

which was misleading. We shall consider more in detail in another chapter just what is implied by our Lord's words on these two occasions. Here we refer to them only to point out that they convey little more than Christ's imprimatur upon the opinions prevalent amongst devout Jews in His day.

CHAPTER X.

The Particular Judgment.

THE first event which takes place after death is the judgment of the soul; for, as theologians have pointed out, there are and indeed must be two judgments; one at the moment of death, to decide the destiny of the soul; the other at Christ's second advent, to manifest God's justice to the world. The first is called the particular judgment, because it has reference only to the individual; and the second, the general judgment, because it embraces all mankind.

There are some persons to whom this may seem strange, and who, perhaps, think that there is only one judgment at the last great day; but Holy Scripture and reason alike demand a judgment immediately following death. We read in the Hebrews, "It is appointed unto men once to die, but *after this* the judgment."[1] This passage is not in itself conclusive, since "after this the judgment" might refer to the general judgment at the last day, though it seems more natural to interpret it as following immediately upon death.

We have, however, the strongest evidence that the

[1] Heb. ix. 27.

latter is the correct interpretation of the passage, since in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus we find two souls that have already been judged. They are separated by that judgment. One is even then receiving some part of his reward, for Abraham affirms of Lazarus that "now he is comforted," while the rich man is enduring his punishment in the torments of Hades. Moreover, Abraham points out that in each case they are receiving the due reward of the deeds of their life on earth. This separation and reward would be impossible unless some judgment had taken place, by which the destiny of each had been determined.

But not only does Holy Scripture always point to a particular judgment in which has been decided the future of the soul, but reason likewise demands it, unless indeed we hold with some heretics the doctrine that the soul remains in a state of unconsciousness and sleep from the moment of death until the second advent of Christ. From the third century until our own day there have been various periods in the Church when heretics have taught this. It is, however, clearly contrary to revelation, since we find Lazarus and Dives intensely conscious of their state. We find Samuel appearing to Saul at Endor, and Moses and Elias to the disciples on the Mount of Transfiguration. Moreover, the promise to the penitent robber, "*To-day* shalt thou be with Me in Paradise," could have no meaning if he was about to enter upon a sleep which should last till the day of judgment.

Furthermore, S. John tells us of souls under the altar in heaven, not sleeping but crying to God: "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?"[1] And S. Peter says that Christ, "being put to death in the flesh, but *quickened* by the Spirit: (by which also He) went and preached unto the spirits in prison; which sometime were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing."[2] It is absolutely certain that, if the soul or spirit slumbers in the intermediate state, Christ could not have gone in His disembodied soul to preach to these spirits in prison, and, even if He had been able to do so, they could not have heard Him, if they were plunged in an unconscious and unbroken slumber.

Nothing, therefore, can be more clear from Holy Scripture than that the soul after death enjoys a conscious existence and enters upon the life in which the evil are separated from the good; so that some judgment must have taken place. At the moment of death, therefore, the soul endures the particular judgment. Of what character it is we are not told. Some have represented it as taking place perhaps in the very room in which the person has died, while their friends are still gathered around the bed. They have held that Jesus Christ, as the Judge, is present; that the devil is there as the accuser, and the Guardian Angel of the soul as witness.

[1] Rev. vi. 10. [2] 1 S. Peter iii. 18-20.

As regards the details of this judgment nothing, of course, can be of faith, since nothing is positively revealed. The most probable opinion is that it is effected by an internal illumination of the mind, by which the soul sees itself, and clearly apprehends itself to be judged according to its works. All, however, agree that the sentence is immediately executed; that the soul, like that of Lazarus, is carried by angels to a place of refreshment and light, or, like that of the rich man, cast into a place of torment.

A most wonderful and at the same time most reverent description of the particular judgment is contained in Cardinal Newman's "Dream of Gerontius," where he describes the soul borne by its Guardian Angel into the presence of Christ, and in the light of that Presence seeing itself as it is, and recognising the purification it needs before it can be worthy to "see Him in the truth of everlasting day."

There are many stories of drowning men who in one moment of time have seen, like a flash of lightning, pass before their eyes the whole record of their life, each sin passing in hideous procession before them. The particular judgment must be something of this sort, though, perhaps, it is not so much its past which the soul realises as what it has made itself in the present and for eternity. In the absolute light and truth of Christ's Presence the soul sees its sins stripped of all excuses, sees itself as God sees it.

If, in spite of many failures, the will is still turned to God, if there is yet possibility for recovery and restoration, that soul begins a course of purification, which prepares it to enter, at last perfect, into the presence of God in heaven. If, on the other hand, the will is hardened in sin, turned away from God, the soul leaves that glorious presence which is indeed hateful and painful to it, and goes to be with other lost souls, to be tormented as the rich man was, tormented by memory.

How acute the memory will be then! Now we easily forget much of our past life. Then every thing will stand out in clearest detail: the opportunities we had and neglected; the loving calls God sent us; the deliberate choice of evil which we made again and again; the wilful rejection of good. Ah! this will be the worm of remorse which dieth not, the utterance of self-reproach: "It was my own fault. I chose this place. I was warned but I would not heed the warning. My sentence is most just; for my torment is the working out of my life as I made it, not as God willed it to be."

Before we pass from this subject it may be interesting to observe the chief points of difference between the particular and general judgments; to answer the question, If the particular judgment determines the destiny of the soul for eternity, why is the general judgment of the last day necessary? We can, of course, only answer this in part, and there may be many purposes of which we have no

conception, but it seems clear that, although their objects are quite different, the two judgments are equally necessary.

The purpose of the particular judgment, as we have seen, is to decide the state of the soul for eternity; and this necessarily must take place at the moment of death, since the soul does not remain unconscious between death and the last day, and therefore its destiny must be immediately determined. The purpose of the general judgment, however, is not to decide the fate of the soul, but to manifest to the world three great facts.

First, the justice, mercy, and love of God, as evidenced in His providential ruling of this world. When we see misfortunes happening to the good, whilst the ungodly flourish "like a green bay-tree," we are often unable to understand God's purposes in His ruling of our life. But in the day of the general judgment the reasons of all these dispensations of God's providence will be made clear to the whole world, and God's wisdom, justice and love will be magnified by all.

Again, the general judgment will manifest the majesty of our Blessed Lord. He came among men as one who was poor and humble and obedient. He put Himself into the power of man, and without resistance suffered all the indignities of His Passion, even to the death upon the Cross. And even since His Ascension into heaven His Passion has lived on in His Church; He has still patiently allowed the

world to treat Him with contempt, to disobey His precepts, and to persecute His Church. But at the day of the general judgment, when He shall appear with all His glory, He will manifest to all men His mighty power, His eternal majesty.

Lastly, the general judgment will reveal the glory of God's elect. In this life the children of Christ, like their Master, often suffer injury and persecution. The world despises them. But in the day of Christ's appearing they will receive the reward of their sufferings, the crown of glory which the Lord shall give to them that love Him. Then, too, the wicked and those hypocrites who have deceived the world by simulating virtues which they did not possess, will be put to shame and confusion.

All these things, however, may be summed up in one, namely, that the general judgment will be a manifestation of the absolute justice and love of God.

There is another point of view from which we may compare the two judgments, that of completeness. This is wanting in the particular judgment, but perfect in the judgment of the last day. At the particular judgment only the soul is judged. In the general judgment the body, the instrument of the soul's sins and good deeds, will be judged and sentenced. At the particular judgment no one will be present to hear your sins and to know your sentence, except, perhaps, your Guardian Angel and the devil. At the general judgment all the world will be there; the page on which your life is

written will be opened, and all will be read out, and with such fulness of detail.

Again, there is a completeness in the matter of the general judgment, which we do not find in the particular. The account of our sins is imperfect when we die, for though both our good works and our sins are then ended, their consequences are not complete.

Think of the effects of the last good work in S. Stephen's life—his prayer for his murderers. To it we may trace S. Paul's conversion, and, therefore, all that followed therefrom, all S. Paul's great missionary work, all the souls he has helped through his Epistles. How wonderful will be the fruits of some good works! At the time they were done they seemed insignificant, but God blessed them, and they brought forth fruit, not an hundred but a thousand fold.

The same is true of sins. A man writes a bad book, like the Decameron of Boccaccio. He may afterwards repent, as Boccaccio is reported to have repented; but the world goes on reading the book, and souls are polluted and ruined. At the general judgment the matter of all our sins and good works, with all their consequences, will be complete, and therefore be ready for judgment.

The constituents of the general judgment are chiefly two: absolute truth and entire completeness. In the light of that great day of Christ's appearing, all falsehood and deception will flee away, and every one will see himself, and will be seen of all, exactly as he is.

"God is a righteous judge . . . . and God is provoked every day."[1] Let us, therefore, judge ourselves now, and confess our sins in the tribunal of mercy, that in the day of judgment they may not rise up to condemn us. For the soul that has thus judged itself continually, God's judgment will have little terror. Beautifully does Newman represent the soul, borne by the Angel on its way to Christ's judgment-seat, uttering these words:

"Dear Angel, say,
Why have I now no fear of meeting Him?
Along my earthly life, the thought of death
And judgment was to me most terrible.
I had it aye before me, and I saw
The Judge severe e'en in the Crucifix.
Now that the hour is come, my fear is fled;
And at this balance of my destiny,
Now close upon me, I can forward look
With a serenest joy.

ANGEL.

It is because
Then thou didst fear, that now thou dost not fear,
Thou has forestall'd the agony, and so
For thee the bitterness of death is past,
Also, because already in thy soul
The judgment is begun. That day of doom,
One and the same for the collected world—
That solemn consummation for all flesh,
Is, in the case of each, anticipate
Upon his death; and, as the last great day
In the particular judgment is rehearsed,

[1] Ps. vii. 12.

So now, too, ere thou comest to the Throne,
A presage falls upon thee, as a ray
Straight from the Judge, expressive of thy lot,
That calm and joy uprising in thy soul
Is first-fruit to thee of thy recompense,
And heaven begun."

CHAPTER XI.

The State of Purification.

AT the moment of death the particular judgment determines the destiny of the soul. Those who have died unrepentant, and with their will turned away from God, like the rich man in the parable, are in a place of torment, separated from God's elect. But what are we to think of those who have died in grace, that is to say, in a state of penitence, and with the will turned to God? Like Lazarus, they are undoubtedly saved. To use the Jewish terminology, they are in Abraham's bosom, in a place of safety, consolation, and repose. And yet the question arises, Can we conceive of all faring alike in the intermediate state?

If two men die, one of whom has lived the life of a saint, and spent his whole strength in God's service and in doing good to his neighbour, while the other has neglected God, committed grievous sin, and lived a life of selfish indulgence, and yet at the last has turned to God in penitence and has been forgiven (as all who repent are forgiven)—if these two men are immediately to

enter heaven or at once to receive the same reward, surely our ideas of God's justice are outraged; for such doctrine seems to offer a premium on leaving repentance to the moment of death.

In regard to heaven, we know that nothing unholy or imperfect can enter there.[1] We are also very conscious that the majority of men when they come to die are very imperfect. Even those who have lived fairly good lives, and have repented of their past sins, seem to need some purification before they pass into heaven itself. Then, too, there is the very large class who have not lived very good lives, and yet who have died in the faith of the Church and the hope of pardon. How are they to be fitted for heaven? Death effects no change in their character. It is but the separation of soul and body, and it leaves the man precisely as he was the moment before he died.

The Church, in her wide charity, has taught us to believe that all these men will be saved; that all who die in grace, all who turn to God, even at the last moment, in penitence, will be saved. But surely there must be some discipline of purification in the intermediate state to effect that change in their character, which is absolutely necessary if they are to enter heaven, where, as we have said, all is perfect. The Church, therefore,

[1] Rev. xxi. 27.

without dogmatizing upon the details, has always taught that there is a discipline of purification or purgation to be undergone in the intermediate state, by which the soul is prepared for heaven.

This purgation differs in each individual according to his need. For some who have lived very holy lives, but little purification may be required. For others who have only turned to God at the last, there must be evidently a longer and more severe course of purification before they can be fitted for the Beatific Vision. To put it in another way, we may say that the particular judgment reveals to each all the sins and imperfections of their character. It reveals this to them, but it does not remove the traces of sin, and cannot purify from sin. In a sense, it is like that examination which the Prayer Book requires us to make before receiving the Holy Communion. If this be thorough, it shows us our sins, but it does not blot them out.

Two things are needed for the restoration of the sinner *in this life*. First, God's pardon, which is secured by an adequate act of penitence. This pardon is the application of the precious Blood of Jesus Christ to the soul, by which the *guilt* of sin is blotted out; for, as S. John says, "The blood of Jesus Christ . . . cleanseth us from all sin."[1] We must, however, be very careful to notice that

[1] 1 S. John i. 7.

while the remission of the guilt of sin restores us to God's favour, it does not of itself remove the results of sin in our character. It does not at once strengthen the weakened will, heal the wounded memory, destroy the evil habits of years. These things can only be effected by the discipline of a life of penitence *after we are forgiven*, by bearing patiently the limitations which our sins have imposed upon our moral nature, by struggling earnestly against old temptations as they return, and by enduring cheerfully the sufferings and sorrows of life as "the due reward of our deeds."

Only very gradually is our moral nature thus restored, and our character developed after the pattern of a Christ-like example. This discipline extends over years; in fact, often embraces the whole life. And it is these two things taken together that produce sanctity—first, the remission of the *guilt* of sin by the cleansing of the precious Blood of Jesus Christ through penitence; then the strengthening of our moral nature, the restoration of our injured faculties, the removal of all traces of sin, which are effected by the discipline of a life of penitence. But the two processes are quite separate and distinct. It is impossible for our character to be restored unless the guilt of sin be first removed. But, on the other hand, the remission of the guilt of sin is only the first step towards restoration of character and the development of holiness.

Now it is evident in the case of a large number of persons when they come to die, that, although they may have gained the remission of the guilt of their sins by their penitence, they pass into the intermediate state with many of the results of sin still upon them, and what they have not done, for lack of opportunity, during their lifetime on earth is effected in the intermediate state by a process of purification, which we shall in this chapter consider.

While reverence must check mere speculation on this mysterious but most interesting subject, revelation encourages us to investigate it; for, as we have seen, S. Paul says, "I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep."[1] And revelation also furnishes us with certain hints in regard to the process of purification.

The principal agent appears to be the memory. Abraham says to the rich man in torments, "Son, remember." What a wonderful faculty memory is! In a sense, it seems to make up a man's individuality, for it links the old man with the child in one continuous life; and if we could conceive of memory being absolutely obliterated, the continuity of life would be destroyed, and there would be nothing to link together the past and the present. In this life, however, memory is at best but feeble. It becomes over-burdened with transient interests,

[1] 1 Thess. iv. 13.

and temporarily forgets more important matters. I say "temporarily forgets," because apparently every act of life is registered by the memory, and only needs a certain stimulus to be re-called. For instance, in old age we remember with great vividness and accuracy the most trifling events of childhood which had passed out of our recollection for many years.

Now it is evident that after death the memory becomes intensely keen. With the dropping off of the outer world of sense, all hindrances to memory are completely removed, and every event of life, every thought and word and deed, stands out clearly before the soul. The memory then will be accurate, reaching back to the earliest years of life, and it will marshal before us all the past.

Among the hindrances with which memory has to contend in this life is lack of time to think things out thoroughly. We shall have no lack of time in the intermediate state, and no interruption to our thoughts. We shall then be able to weigh each sin accurately, to estimate its intrinsic malice, to see clearly the selfish motives of many of our actions, and to realise the flimsy character of the excuses with which the devil so liberally and ingeniously supplied us.

Then, again, we shall have seen our Lord in all the glory of His perfect Holiness, and we shall therefore have a standard of holiness with

which to compare ourselves, and against which our sins will stand out in all their horror. This will produce an agony of self-reproach, surpassing anything we ever felt on earth. It will be the refiner's fire purifying us, revealing to us the dross in our nature, teaching us to hate sin as we never hated it before, and to shrink from it with loathing.

Memory, then, will call into work the cleansing fire which will destroy in us the traces of those sins, the guilt of which has been remitted by penitence when we were on earth. We shall not, however, reflect only upon our sins, but upon the opportunities which we neglected, God's calls to which we turned a deaf ear, the holy impulses which we disregarded. We shall know how much God did through His providence to keep us from sin, how wilful our sins were. And this will involve suffering, intense pain, and yet a pain mingled with joy, since we shall know that we are forgiven, that we are saved, and that in the very intensity of our suffering, in learning to hate sin, the evil in us is gradually being obliterated, and we are being prepared for God's Presence in heaven, and are becoming continually more holy.

Another element in our purification will be our love for God. We recognise our duty in this life to love God with all our heart, and all our soul, and all our mind, and all our strength; and yet how sadly we fail. I suppose no complaint is

more frequent than the confession that we do not love God as we ought, as we wish to. There have been periods in our lives, perhaps, when we have felt a deep and abiding love for God, and it has transformed our whole nature with an intense happiness; for there is no happiness like the happiness of loving unless it be the happiness of knowing that we are loved by the object of our affections. This we experience in our life here. We know that God loves us, and when that love awakes a response in our heart it fills us with intense joy, a desire to serve God, a longing for some opportunity to prove our love by a great act of sacrifice, and doubtless if we feed the flame of love in our soul with sacrifice it will burn brighter and brighter. But, alas, the duty of sacrifice, while accepted in theory, is so repugnant to our self-love that it is rarely carried out practically for any length of time.

When Solomon dedicated his temple to God, we are told that the fire of God came down from heaven and consumed the sacrifices and burnt offerings,[1] and that fire was kept alive and fed with sacrifices every night and every morning. This is a type of our own spiritual life. The heavenly gift, the love of God, is kindled in us like a fire. But a fire cannot continue to burn without fuel, and the only fuel which will keep alive that flame is sacrifice. Just as the fire upon God's

[1] 2 Chron. vii. 1.

altar in the temple existed only that it might be fed daily with sacrifice, so is it with the love of God in our hearts. It cannot increase, it cannot even hold its own in us unless it be fed. But here on earth we are so engrossed in feeding our material and sensuous nature that we often starve the love of God in our soul, and allow it to die down and almost to expire.

This will not be so in the intermediate state. All hindrances to the love of God will then be removed. We shall have seen our Lord at the moment of the particular judgment, and we shall have been ravished by His beauty. We shall love Him then as we have never loved before, and that love will become a great factor in our purification; for, as we reflect upon our many sins, as we recall the opportunities of God's service which we have neglected, the means of grace which we have misused, the occasions for acts of sacrifice and suffering which we have turned away from, we shall not only repent of these things because of their intrinsic evil, but the recollection of them will be agony to us, for we shall recognise in each an outrage of God's love.

We shall not only realise that we have sinned but, as David wrote, that we have sinned against God—"Against Thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight."[1] We shall ask

[1] Ps. li. 4.

ourselves, How could I have loved God and refused that opportunity of sacrifice? How could I have loved God and left undone that plain duty to which He called me? How could I have loved God and sinned against Him so deliberately? The love of God, which will then be burning in our heart, will, like a flame, consume gradually the remains of sin in us. Memory will drag out from its secret recesses every trace of sin in our lives, and cast each into the flame of love, and the conflagration will spread until it has purified us from all the remains of sin. But the process will be exquisitely painful, and yet at the same time it will awaken in us the keenest joy. We would not suffer one whit less, for we would not have one trace of sin left in us. This will be the refiner's fire, the love of God, doing its work in our souls, unimpeded, unhindered by the love of self or the love of the world.

CHAPTER XII.

The Teaching of the Early Church in regard to Purification.

THERE is a question of great interest which will naturally arise in the minds of many—What is the teaching of the early Church in regard to the purification of the intermediate state, as evidenced by the writings of the Fathers upon this subject and by the inscriptions in the catacombs?

We find side by side two aspects of the intermediate state, which though they seem paradoxical are not contradictory. First, it was regarded as a state of peace and repose and refreshment: peace, for "The strife is o'er, the battle done"; repose, for "They rest from their labours, and their works do follow them";[1] and refreshment according to the prayer of the Western Canon, "Grant to them a place of refreshment, light, and peace," and to numerous inscriptions in the catacombs. But we also find another view, that the intermediate state was one of pain and suffering and purification.

[1] Rev. xiv. 13.

The mediæval accretions of certain scholastics have created a prejudice against the word purgatory; and yet no word more fitly describes what seems to have been held and taught by the Church from its earliest ages. Our Article XXII., in condemning "the *Romish* doctrine concerning purgatory," evidently affirms some other doctrine in regard to purgatory, and, inasmuch as it was written before the definition of purgatory contained in the decrees of the Council of Trent, it cannot possibly refer to this which is now the only authoritative teaching of the Roman Church on the subject. Moreover, the doctrine repudiated by our Article is condemned in the strongest terms by the Council of Trent.

If we ask what was this "Romish doctrine" against which the Article was directed, it is not at all difficult to answer the question. It was a mediæval corruption which was thought to invalidate the power of the Passion of Christ, which led to the most scandalous abuses, and against which the decree of the Council of Trent was as earnestly a protest as our Article.

Bishop Forbes, in his work on the Thirty-nine Articles, remarks: "The doctrine of purgatory, against which the Article excepts, is that which is made patent to the eye of every traveller as he passes from Germany into Italy. The wayside shrines which so edify him still continue, but the subjects are changed. In the place of the affecting

representation of the sufferings of the Eternal Son . . . . which speak[s] to the soul of the wayfarer, terrible representations of the holy souls in flames appal him . . . . appealing for a few pence to the awakened sympathies of the passers-by."

This popular doctrine at the time of the Reformation had probably come, in the case of most men, to take the place of a living faith in the eternal pains of hell. It was also largely mingled with interested motives on the part of the clergy. There was a shameful traffic in Masses for these souls, and men fancied that by leaving money to the Church at the hour of death, and at the expense of their heirs, they might purchase mitigation or exemption from pains which in degree, though not in duration, were said to equal the pains of hell.

Very different from this is the wise reserve of the definition of the Council of Trent. It simply affirms that there is a state of purification, without attempting to dogmatize on it, and adds: "Let the more difficult and subtle questions, and those which tend not to edification and from which, for the most part, there is no increase of piety, be excluded from popular discourses before the uneducated multitude. In like manner such things as are uncertain, or which labour under an appearance of error, let them not be allowed to be made public and treated of. But those things which tend to a certain kind of curiosity or superstition, or which savour of filthy

lucre, let them prohibit as scandalous and stumbling-blocks of the faithful."[1]

Are not these words quite as strong a protest as our Article?

We may distinguish between what is essential in the doctrine of purgatory and what is mere matter of opinion. Two points only are essential: that there is a purgatory, and that the souls there detained can be helped by the prayers and good works of the Church on earth. All else belongs to the sphere of speculative theology, and can be at best only a matter of theological opinion.

There are certain passages of Holy Scripture which undoubtedly influenced the language of the Fathers in regard to purgatory. These frequently employ the image of the refiner of precious metals as illustrating the purification of the soul. For instance, "When He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold";[2] "Thou, O God, hast proved us: Thou hast tried us, as silver is tried";[3] "I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried";[4] "He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver";[5] "Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort

[1] "Conc. Trident," Sess. XXV. [2] Job xxiii. 10.
[3] Ps. lxvi. 10. [4] Zech. xiii. 9 [5] Mal. iii. 3.

it is. . . . . If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire";[1] "The trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with the fire";[2] "For everyone shall be salted with fire."[3]

One of the most ancient documents of Christianity, and certainly one of the most absolutely authentic, is the Acts of the martyrdom of S. Perpetua and S. Felicitas. These Acts contain a vision vouchsafed to S. Perpetua shortly before her martyrdom, and were written by her own hand. The date is fixed by the mention of the birthday of Geta Cæsar, and must therefore be assigned to some time between the years 200 and 203.

In this vision S. Perpetua sees her brother Dinocrates in suffering. She prays for him, and in another vision sees him freed from suffering, and understands from her vision that he had been "translated from punishment." Dr. Pusey, in a letter written in 1845 to Dr. Wilberforce, the Bishop-Elect of Oxford, tells him that it was the reading of this vision which forced him, with great reluctance, to accept the doctrine of purgatory. Dr. Pusey says: "If I may explain my meaning, the remarkable Acts of SS. Perpetua and Felicitas, which were beyond question genuine, contains a very solemn vision, which involves the doctrine of process of purification after death by suffering, to

[1] 1 Cor. iii. 13, 15. [2] 1 S. Peter i. 7. [3] S. Mark ix. 49.

shorten which prayer was available. I came upon it while reading the Acts for another purpose: it was great pain to me. The ground was taken from under me. I had interpreted passages (as of S. Basil), as I saw, wrongly, under a bias the other way; solemn as it was, I could not, taking all together, refuse my belief to an intermediate state of cleansing, in some cases through pain. The history was a revelation, at a very solemn time, to a martyr, falling in with much which might be the meaning of Holy Scripture and very much in the Fathers, stamping it upon my mind. I could not escape it."[1]

Tertullian, who was a contemporary of S. Perpetua and S. Felicitas, in his treatise "De Anima," cap. lviii., states that no one would hesitate to believe that the soul undergoes in Hades some compensatory discipline. His words are: "It is therefore quite in keeping with this order of things that that part of our nature should be the first to have the recompense and reward to which they are due on account of its priority. In short, inasmuch as we understand the 'prison' pointed out in the Gospel to be Hades, and as we also interpret the 'uttermost farthing' to mean the very smallest offence which has to be atoned for *there before the Resurrection*, no one would hesitate to believe that the soul undergoes in Hades some compensatory discipline without prejudice to the

[1] Liddon, "Life of Pusey," Vol. III., page 44.

full process of the Resurrection, when the recompense will be administered through the flesh besides."

S. Cyprian, in his "Epistle ad Antonianum," contrasts the glory of martyrdom, securing immediate admission to heaven, with a purgatorial state, in which the soul, after having been tormented by protracted pain for sins, is to be cleansed and purged for a long time by fire. S. Cyprian was martyred in the year 258. His words are: "It is one thing to stand waiting for pardon, another to attain to glory; one thing having been cast into prison not to go out thence until the uttermost farthing is paid, another to receive immediately the reward of faith and virtue; one thing, after having been tormented by protracted pains for sins, to be cleansed and purged for a long time by fire, another to have all things purged away by a passion (martyrdom); and finally, it is one thing to wait the sentence of the Day of Judgment, another to be immediately crowned by the Lord."

S. Hilary of Poictiers, commenting on the words, "My soul hath longed for Thy judgments at all times,"[1] says that souls which are to be cleansed from sin must endure heavy punishments, unyielding fire. He died in 368.

S. Basil, in his commentary on Isaiah, cap. ix., n. 8, 9, tells us that if a sin be uncovered by confession, it is made meet to be consumed by the cleansing fire, and points out that this fire does

[1] Ps. cxix. 20.

not destroy, but purges the soul. He died in 379.

S. Cyril, who died about 386, tells us that the effect of offering the Holy Eucharist for the souls of the faithful departed is similar to the mitigation or remission of punishment which a king would grant, at the intercession of their friends, to those who were suffering his vengeance; thus intimating that there is suffering in the intermediate state.

S. Gregory of Nyssa, who died about 395, tells us that the soul must either be purified in this life by prayer and devotion to wisdom, or after death must make expiation by means of the furnace of cleansing fire. In another passage he speaks of this as the purgatorial fire which takes away the stains intermingled with the soul. In a third he speaks of the washing away of material stains with purgatorial fire. And in a fourth he speaks of the soul as purified by fire according to the teaching of the Gospel, or refreshed by the dew of benediction.

S. Ambrose, who died in 397, divides those suffering in the intermediate state into two classes. He tells us that the lost should remain in the fire, and the saved should pass through it.

S. Augustine, who died in 430, states that a baptized infant not only is not destined for eternal punishments, but shall not even suffer purgatorial torments after death; thus clearly intimating his

opinion that some who are not infants do suffer such torments. In another passage S. Augustine speaks of three classes: those who spend their life so wickedly that they are unworthy of the prayers of the Church (that is, that for them the prayers of the Church cannot avail); those who spend it so well that they have no need of them (that is, the saints in heaven); and an intermediate class who have to endure pains proper to the spirits of the dead, but who through the prayers of the Church shall be accorded mercy and acquitted from the punishment of eternal fire.

In yet another passage S. Augustine explicitly speaks of the opinion that in the intermediate state the spirits of the dead shall be exposed to a fire of such nature, that while it shall not affect those who have lived a holy life, it will consume the traces of worldliness in others. And in yet another passage he says, "It is not incredible that some of the faithful may be saved through a purgatorial fire, but this does not refer to the lost; that is, to those who shall not possess the Kingdom of God."

S. Paulinus, the friend and correspondent of S. Augustine, who died in 431, asks another friend, Amandus, to join him in the work of prayer for his brother who had lately died; for he says that "those who are tossing in the glowing darkness will be refreshed by the dew of God's mercy, by the dawning light of His love."

S. Gregory the Great, who died in 604, speaks

in several places of the intermediate state, and clearly expresses his conviction that there is a purgatorial fire before judgment, in which some will expiate their sins, while others will undergo the sentence of damnation; and further, not only asserts but gives his reasons for asserting that the souls of just men made perfect are now in heaven.

In his "Dialogues," S. Gregory treats the question of the intermediate state at great length, and gives us the Catholic view of purgatory in all its essential features. He shows that what had been a matter of theological opinion among the earlier Fathers had in his own day become accepted as the ordinary teaching of the Church.

When we speak of the "Fathers of the Church," some writers extend the term to those who lived down to the time of S. Bernard in the eleventh century; others confine it to the writers of the first six centuries, ending with S. Gregory the Great, who died in 604. We have only given passages from these earlier Fathers of the Church, and have by no means exhausted the list. But sufficient have been quoted to show without doubt that in the most ancient ages of the Church, and by those Fathers who are regarded as of the greatest authority and who formulated the theology of the Church, the doctrine of purification through suffering was clearly recognised and taught. The Anglican Communion, perhaps, regards S. Augustine as its greatest

authority on matters of theology; yet none can be clearer than S. Augustine in his statement of this doctrine.

As we have seen, in mediæval times the doctrine of purgatory was grossly exaggerated, and taught in a most material form. The first great reaction from this is found in the writings of a woman—one of the two great women whose writings have influenced the theology of the Church. S. Catherine of Genoa, who died in the year 1510, wrote a short treatise on purgatory, which must have seemed revolutionary in her own age, but which has made its way and is accepted to-day as the basis of the teaching of most theologians. She says, "It would be impossible to find any joy comparable to that of a soul in purgatory (except the joy of the Blessed in Paradise), a joy which goes on increasing day by day as God more and more flows in upon the soul, which He does abundantly in proportion as every hindrance to His entrance is consumed away."

Again she writes: "As far as their will is concerned, these souls cannot acknowledge the pain as such, so completely are they satisfied with the ordinance of God, so entirely is their will one with it in pure charity. On the other hand, they suffer a torment so extreme, that no tongue could describe it, no intellect could form the least idea of it, if God had not made it known by special grace."

And again, "But still I see that the Being of God is so pure (far more than one can imagine), that

should a soul see in itself even the least mote of imperfection, it would rather cast itself into a thousand hells than go with that spot into the presence of the Divine Majesty. Therefore, seeing purgatory ordained to take away such blemishes, it plunges therein, and deems it a great mercy that it can thus remove them."

Again she writes: "It is true that the overflowing love of God bestows upon the souls in purgatory a happiness beyond expression great: but then this happiness does not in the least diminish the pain—rather the pain is constituted by this love finding itself impeded; the more perfect the love of which God makes the soul capable, the greater the pain. In this manner the souls in purgatory at the same time experience the greatest happiness and the most excessive pain; and one does not prevent the other."

Again, "These souls are so closely united to, so transformed into the will of God, that in all things they are satisfied with His most holy decree; and were a soul presented before God with ever so little to purge away, it would suffer grievous hurt and a torment worse than ten purgatories. . . . . Hence they suffer all their pains gladly, and would not rid them of a single pang, knowing that it is justly deserved and righteously ordained: they no more complain of God, so far as their will is concerned, than if they were in life eternal."

And again, "No sufferings could make me wish it

otherwise than God has determined for me; I remain in my prison without a wish to come out till God has done all that I need. My happiness is that God shall be satisfied; and the greatest pain I could endure would be being excluded from His ordinance, for I see how just and merciful it is."

Lastly she writes: "The souls in purgatory, having their wills perfectly conformed to the Will of God, and hence partaking of His Goodness, remain satisfied with their condition, which is one of entire freedom from the guilt of sin."

A consideration of these passages will show how wonderfully S. Catherine combined the two elements of the intermediate state, the idea of peace and happiness with that of suffering and purification. We say wonderfully, because she wrote at a time when the grossest views of purgatory were generally prevalent. S. Francis de Sales later adopted and popularised her view of purgatory, and Newman expresses it in one of the most powerful sacred poems in the English language, "The Dream of Gerontius," in which he describes his conception of the experience of a soul after death. The writer would venture to recommend every mourner to read Newman's poem.[1] It will be found free from those gross conceptions of purgatory which are associated with the ordinary Romish view, and inspired with deep reverence and marvellous spiritual insight. He recognises as the great element in purification the

[1] "The Dream of Gerontius" is published by Longman, Green & Co.

sight of Christ at the particular judgment, ravishing the soul with Divine love, but revealing to it its own imperfections, and then that quickened love awakening a great desire for whatever suffering may perfectly cleanse it from sin, and make it worthy of the Presence of its Lord.

CHAPTER XIII.

The Progress of the Soul.

In the last chapter we considered the work of purification which takes place in the intermediate state, that work by which, after the guilt of sin has been forgiven in this world, the remains of sin are gradually removed in the world beyond. Purification, however, is but negative, the removal of the hindrances to the operation of the Holy Spirit in the soul, so that in proportion as the capacity of the soul is thus increased the love of God may flow in and completely fill it.

In this chapter we must advance a step further, and ask whether we have any reason to believe that after death there is a positive progress of the soul in holiness and spiritual development. The answer to this question seems to be supplied by a passage in the Epistle to the Philippians, in which S. Paul says, "Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."[1] These words require most careful examination.

[1] Phil. i. 6.

We may notice first that S. Paul does not express his confidence that the good work begun in the Philippians will continue until the day of their death, but "until the day of Jesus Christ"; and we know from other passages[1] that "the day of Jesus Christ," in S. Paul's language, means the day of Christ's second advent, the day of judgment.

Further, we must observe that the word translated "will perform,"[2] really means will fulfil, will accomplish to the very end, will perfect. Indeed, the passage is so translated in the Revised Version "That he which began a good work in you will perfect it."

Lastly we must draw attention to "hath begun." This is an aorist participle, and implies a definite point of time. It is also the word used in classical Greek for the initiation into religious mysteries; and the word "perfect" has a sacrificial sense. So that we can affirm, without hesitation, that S. Paul was referring to the beginning of the good work in the Philippians at their baptism, and asserting his confidence that He who began it, God, would not merely continue it until the day of their death, but would fulfil it and perfect it until the day of judgment.

Again we may ask ourselves, Who is it that is to perfect the good work? He who began it, God the Holy Ghost. In the Epistle to the Galatians S. Paul

[1] 1 Cor. v. 5; 2 Cor. i. 14; Phil. i. 10; 1 Thess. v. 2; 2 Thess. ii. 2. [2] ἐπιτελέσει.

says, "Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?"[1] In this passage we have the same two words "begun" and "made perfect" as in Philippians, and the addition of the Agent through whom they began their spiritual life, the Holy Ghost, makes it clear that S. Paul is referring in both passages to baptism as the beginning of spiritual life, and to the operation of the Holy Ghost in its development.

Theologians[2] point out that the special function of the Holy Ghost is the perfecting of the works of God, not that God's works were originally imperfect, but that they are often incomplete in the sense that they are undeveloped, and sometimes marred after creation by evil agency. It is the work then of the Holy Ghost to perfect and restore God's creatures.

We see this very strikingly evidenced in the account of creation. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."[3] But something happened to mar that creation, and the earth became waste and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep. Then it was that the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters, and it was by His operation that the earth was developed and prepared for man's abode. Then after the fall of man we find the Holy Ghost the Agent in preparing man for the Incarnation; for He spake by the prophets, revealing God's will, convincing man of sin, making

[1] Gal. iii. 3. [2] *e.g.* S. Basil. [3] Gen. i. 1.

known to man God's gracious promises and declaring God's judgments.

At the Incarnation, too, the Holy Ghost was the Agent, overshadowing the Blessed Virgin Mary, and by His operation upon her substance accomplishing the Incarnation. Yet again at Pentecost He came down upon the new-born Church, and, according to Christ's promise, has guided the Church into truth, supplying her with grace and wisdom and strength.

But what the Holy Ghost does for the Church in its corporate capacity He does for each member of Christ's Body individually; that is, He develops and perfects the life of God in the soul, not only during the period of our sojourn on earth, but, as S. Paul so distinctly intimates, *until* the day of Jesus Christ.

In this world there are many hindrances to spiritual growth, chief among which S. Paul puts "the flesh"; for he says, "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would."[1] By the term "flesh," however, we must understand in S. Paul's psychology the whole bent and bias which man receives from the lower part of his nature, not merely one particular class of temptations.

As we have before observed, it is through the senses that the world approaches the soul; and we know how great are its powers of choking the spiritual life. In the parable of the sower our Lord

[1] Gal. v. 17.

interprets the seed which fell among thorns as representing those who "are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection."[1] Other hindrances to spiritual growth are the deceitfulness of the world, the influence of companions, above all the engrossing interests of this world occupying so much of our time, and thought, and strength. But after death all these hindrances will be removed, and there will be no further obstacle to spiritual growth.

We may regard our life as consisting of three stages: our life here, our life in the intermediate state, and our life in heaven.

As regards the first, we are born into this world with potential forces, intellectual and moral, which are gradually developed. The brain of the little child contains all the possibilities which are afterwards developed in the highly educated man. The innocence of the child grows gradually, though with many checks and falls, into the mature sanctity of the saint. Nothing can be more evident, therefore, than that the first stage of our life, which is passed in this world, is one of continuous and extraordinary progress. The school-boy becomes the great statesman. The intellectual and moral power, afterwards so wonderfully displayed, existed potentially in the child. But we must remember that our development here is constantly checked and obstructed, and sometimes altogether destroyed, by

[1] S. Luke viii. 14.

the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil, with which we have to struggle daily, and through which we pass either to ultimate victory or defeat.

The second stage of our life is passed in the intermediate state. There all these hindrances are removed, so that this stage is one of uninterrupted progress. But not only are there no obstacles to our spiritual growth in that life, but there are great helps. First, of course, as we have already intimated, is the work of the Holy Ghost. Here we grieve the Spirit, sometimes quench the Spirit. There the operation of the Holy Ghost will have absolute control in us. And the Holy Ghost is God Almighty. When we were on earth we were able to thwart His gracious designs for us by our own self-will; but after death, if we die in grace, our will is perfectly conformed to God's will; so that we surrender ourselves entirely to the operation of the Holy Ghost. What wonderful results may we expect from this, what marvellous growth!

The second great factor of the soul's progress in the intermediate state will be that perfect love for God to which we referred as the result, on the one hand, of the removal of all other attractions, and, on the other, of having seen the face of Jesus Christ at the moment of judgment, and being filled with an overwhelming love for Him. Love is the greatest power on earth. What deeds of heroism, what works of devotion has it not inspired in this life! What

energies, then, will it not quicken in the intermediate state! The love of God in us, and the operation of the Holy Ghost will be the two great agencies in the development of the spiritual faculties of the soul.

We may observe in our life here the rapid growth of body and mind during the state of preparation for manhood as contrasted with its slower development afterwards. For instance, between the age of eleven and twenty-one a man's intellectual and moral faculties are developed enormously. After his majority the growth is much slower. The young man leaving college, having taken the highest honours, may not have the experience of life or the varied knowledge of literature which he may afterwards acquire, but he probably has his intellectual faculties developed almost to perfection. So it may be in the state of preparation in the other world, that the growth of our spiritual faculties will be very rapid, since there will be no hindrances and immense helps—not only the work of the Holy Ghost within us, but the association with spiritual beings who, like ourselves, are being made perfect.

This may enable us, perhaps, to understand how the souls of infants dying before committing actual sin may attain to great spiritual development, and the souls of those whose intellect in this world was blunted or lost by some form of insanity, may be restored and developed, as was the case with the Gadarene demoniacs, who, after our Lord's healing,

were found clothed and in their right mind at the feet of Jesus.[1]

In connection with the progress of the soul in the intermediate state, there will probably be some continuation of the interests and work, so far as it was work for God, which was pursued on earth. For example, S, Peter tells us that immediately after death our Lord, "quickened by the Spirit . . . . went and preached unto the spirits in prison";[2] that is to say, the work of preaching redemption, which Christ began on earth, He continued in the intermediate state. So too we find in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, Abraham ministering to the soul of Lazarus. Abraham in his life on earth was conspicuous for his hospitality to strangers, and his kindness to his nephew; and the phrase "Abraham's bosom" implies a place not only of repose, but the reclining at a feast, and therefore hospitable care on the part of Abraham: These are mere hints, but they point very clearly in the direction of the continuation of the interests of this life, so far as they were in accordance with God's will and devoted to His service.

The third stage of our life will be in heaven, and may also be one of progress; but with this we are not now concerned. We have, however, seen what great evidence there is, both from revelation and reason, to suppose that the period which the

[1] *Cf.* S. Mark v. 15; S. Matt. viii. 28; S. Luke vii. 26.

[2] 1 S. Peter iii. 18-19.

disembodied soul will pass in the intermediate state will be one not only of purification from the remains of sin, but of positive development of all spiritual faculties in preparation for the perfect life of heaven, and that this growth will continue under the operation of the Holy Ghost until the day of Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER XIV.

Knowledge and Recognition in the Intermediate State.

To those who have lost dear ones whom they loved, two questions of intense interest suggest themselves at this point. First, do the dead know what is going on in the world they have left, so far at least as to have some cognisance of the welfare of those who were so near to them on earth? Are they aware how deeply they are mourned, how faithfully their wishes are being fulfilled, how diligently they are remembered before the throne of grace in daily prayer, how frequently the Holy Sacrifice of the Altar is pleaded on their behalf and for the repose of their souls? Then, further, is there mutual recognition in the realm of disembodied souls? Will the husband or wife recognise there the children who have preceded them? Shall we know there our parents and intimate friends? And, what is nearest perhaps to the heart of the mourner, when our days of pilgrimage in this vale of sorrow are ended, shall we be re-united with those we have lost, in the sense that we shall recognise them and have intercourse with them?

It will be best to begin with an investigation of the second question, Will there be mutual recognition in the spirit-world, and what does this recognition involve?

We have already drawn attention to the view of the ancients, that they believed that they would meet and converse with those who had preceded them into the kingdom of the dead. Now we shall confine ourselves more especially to inferences which may be drawn from revelation, and these seem to enable us to answer the question with an unhesitating affirmative, to say not merely that we have *hope* of such mutual recognition, but that we have grounds for *faith* in it.

A careful investigation of God's method of working in this world shows a gradual progress and development in the spheres alike of nature and revelation. Geology unfolds to us the record of progress in the physical world; history that of development in man's mental and moral growth; while in revelation we find the same method pursued—truths at first dimly recognised growing clearer with advancing stages of spiritual knowledge.

The first dim foreshadowing of the intermediate state is found scattered through the Pentateuch in the frequent use of the expression "gathered unto his people"[1] as applied to the patriarchs; and while

[1] Gen. xxv. 8, 17; xxxv. 29; xlix. 29, 33; Num. xx. 24, 26; xxvii. 13; xxxi. 2; Deut. xxxii. 50.

this has been held by some to be a mere euphemism for death or burial, we venture to think that we can show that such an explanation is not only inconsistent with the context of the passages in which this expression is found, but that it is contradicted by later revelation.

The first place in which we find these words is the description of the death of Abraham, in connection with which we read: "Then Abraham gave up the ghost, and died in a good old age, an old man, and full of years; *and was gathered to his people.* And his sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah."[1] If we examine this passage carefully we shall observe that the being "gathered to his people" follows the record of his death but precedes that of his burial, and that it cannot be identified with *either* since it is distinguished from each by the conjunction "and." If being "gathered to his people" is equivalent to dying, how can it be said that he died *and* was gathered to his people? If it be identified with burial, why does it say he "was gathered to his people, *and* his sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him"? "And" connects two distinct ideas, but it cannot indicate that the two clauses which it connects are identical.

Some persons, however, have put forth the theory that being "gathered to his people" means being laid to rest in the ancestral burying-place. Let us

[1] Gen. xxv. 8-9.

see how far this theory will stand the test of Holy Scripture.

We have an account of the death of Moses in the Book of Deuteronomy, where God first told Moses, in these words, that he should die: "Get thee up into this mountain Abarim, unto mount Nebo, which is in the land of Moab, that is over against Jericho; and behold the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel for a possession: and die in the mount whither thou goest up, *and be gathered unto thy people;* as Aaron thy brother died in mount Hor, and was gathered unto his people."[1]

Does this mean that he was to be laid to rest in his ancestral burying-place? Certainly not; for we read: "So Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord. And he buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Beth-peor: but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day."[2] His ancestral burying-place must have been somewhere in Egypt, but he was buried in Moab, and no man knows where he was buried. So that this quite disposes of the view that being "gathered to his people" means being laid to rest in the ancestral burying-place.

If, however, it still be objected that being "gathered unto his people" implies no more than entering the spirit-world, to pass there an unconscious existence, unrecognised by those around him,

[1] Deut. xxxii. 49-50. [2] Deut. xxxiv. 5-6.

may we not say that this is an inference quite unwarranted by these passages, and clearly contradicted by other parts of revelation? For the inference suggested by the words "gathered unto his people" is mutual recognition, and other passages, which we shall proceed to examine, clearly show that such mutual recognition is taught by revelation.

We shall only draw attention to one other passage in the Old Testament, David mourning for the death of his child by Bath-sheba. Nathan had told David that part of his punishment should be the death of the child of his sin. David, however, besought God for the child, and fasted, and lay all night upon the earth, but on the seventh day when the child died, David arose, and washed and anointed himself, and came into the house of the Lord, and worshipped, and came to his own house, and did eat; and when his servants said unto him, "What thing is this that thou hast done? thou didst fast and weep for the child, while it was alive; but when the child was dead, thou didst rise and eat bread. And he said, While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept: for I said, Who can tell whether God will be gracious to me, that the child may live? But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? *I shall go to him*, but he shall not return to me."[1] The phrase, "I shall go to him," surely suggests something more than that David would some day

[1] 2 Sam. xii. 21-23.

die. To go to a person implies to see them and hold converse with them.

If, however, we pass from the Old Testament to the New, we find in our Lord's parable of the rich man and Lazarus a much clearer light thrown upon this subject, for there we are told that the rich man saw and recognised both Abraham and Lazarus, and conversed with Abraham; and though it may be said that the imagery, being parabolic, must not be used as though it were the utterance of dogmatic truth, yet on the other hand we must remember that it is quite inconceivable that our Lord would use imagery which could lead us into error in such a matter.

As we have already seen, Christ in this parable adopted the prevalent opinions of the Jews of His day in regard to the intermediate state, and by so doing He certainly endorsed them as substantially true, even though we concede that the imagery used must not be pressed. We have, however, in S. Peter's Epistle words which are not parabolic, where S. Peter says that Christ, "being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit, ... went and preached unto the spirits in prison."[1] Unless Christ could recognise these spirits, and they could recognise Him, it is quite inconceivable how He could have preached to them.

Reason and revelation, therefore, alike teach that in the world beyond the grave we shall recognise

[1] 1 S. Peter iii. 18-19.

and have intercourse with one another. This involves, however, some sort of a spiritual body, which, as we have already shown,[1] revelation seems to imply. We are told of the souls under the altar that "white robes were given unto every one of them."[2] It is a little difficult to understand how white robes, even metaphorically, could be given to them unless they had some form or shape or spiritual body; for you cannot clothe that which has none of these qualities.

Recognition also seems to imply certain organs of perception belonging to this new spiritual body; and that these organs are immaterial, and built up, so to speak, out of the spirit world in which the soul dwells may be apprehended by considering that it is not the eye of the body properly speaking which now sees, but the soul sees through the eye. It is not the bodily tongue which speaks, and the bodily ear which hears, but the soul acting through these organs, and the soul even now is a spiritual entity. So that we have to admit that even in this life there exists a spiritual capacity of seeing, hearing, and speaking, which uses as its instruments the organs of our earthly body, built up in a mysterious way from our present material surroundings.

It is, therefore, no more difficult to conceive that in the spirit-world it will be possible for our spirit to build up out of that world organs by which it may exercise its spiritual faculties of perception and of

[1] pp. 90, 91. [2] Rev. vi. 11.

self-communication. Bishop Bull has suggested that the disembodied soul may be able to perceive "by the help of some new subtler organs and instruments fitted to its present state, which, either by its own native power, given in its creation, it forms to itself or by a special act of Divine power it is supplied with."[1]

There remains for our consideration the further question whether the souls in the intermediate state have any knowledge of what is going on in this world, in connection with the interests of those they love; whether they know that we still care for them, and pray for them, and strive to carry out their wishes; and if so, by what means they obtain this knowledge.

This question is much more difficult than that of which we have treated. We may say without the slightest hesitation that both reason and revelation alike teach the doctrine of mutual recognition in the intermediate state and in heaven. But while we may believe that those near and dear to us know something of our welfare and of our care for them, we cannot demonstrate it in the same satisfactory manner as mutual recognition. There is little or no light shed on the subject in revelation, the only passages, perhaps, being the interest which the spirit of Samuel showed in regard to the affairs of Saul,[2] and the anxiety manifested by the rich man in the parable for the salvation of his brethren.

[1] Bp. Bull, "Concerning the Middle State of Happiness or Misery," Ser. 3.

[2] *Cf.* 1 Sam. xxviii. 15-19.

Recognition in the Intermediate State.

There has been and is, however, an almost universal belief that the souls in the intermediate state, and certainly the saints in heaven, do know, so far as God wills it, something of the affairs of those they loved on earth. When, however, we inquire by what means they gain this knowledge we have only the speculations of theologians to guide us.

In regard to the saints in heaven it is generally held that they are conscious of nothing except God and such things as He may be pleased to reveal to them, but that in the vision of God, as in a mirror, they see, so to speak, reflected such things as God wills them to see of the affairs of earth, and thus they know of the welfare of those they loved, and of the intercessions for which they are asked by those on earth. This, however, does not apply to those in the intermediate state, for they have not yet been admitted to the Beatific Vision.

S. Augustine suggests that there may be three methods by which these may obtain such information: From those who, dying, pass from hence to them; from the holy angels who know what is taking place in this world; and by a revelation of the Spirit of God. He adds, however, that they do not know everything that goes on, but only such things as God wills that they should know. The passage is of sufficient interest for us to translate it in full. "We must therefore admit that the dead indeed are ignorant of what is done here whilst it is taking place. Afterwards, however, they hear of it

from those who by dying pass from hence to them. They do not, indeed, hear all things but only such as they are allowed to declare who are permitted to remember these things, and such as it behoves those to hear to whom they declare them. The dead may also hear something from the angels who are present at the things which are done here, which He to Whom all things are subject judges that each of them should hear. The spirits of the dead are able to know some things which are done here which are necessary for them to know, not only in regard to the past or present, but also to the future, by the Spirit of God revealing these things to them."[1]

There is little we can add to these words of S. Augustine. They embrace the only three ways in which we can conceive of the holy dead obtaining information in regard to those they loved on earth: By the ministry of angels; by the news brought to the spirit-world from time to time by their friends; and by some special revelation of God's Holy Spirit. Other fathers of the Church have expressed opinions on the subject. We shall conclude this chapter with a very short extract from the writings of S. Gregory Nazianzen. Writing of Peter of Alexandria, he says, "Having departed this life in a good old age, after many conflicts and struggles, I well know that he now gazes down from above upon our affairs, and stretches out a hand to those who are labouring in

[1] S. Aug., "De Cura pro Mortuis gerenda," xv.

the cause of right, and by so much the more in that he is now free from restraints." These words show that this great theologian had no doubt whatever that the faithful dead have not only knowledge of but power to help those still struggling on earth.

CHAPTER XV.

The Goal of the Soul—Heaven.

We have discussed with some fulness the condition of the soul in the intermediate state, and must now proceed to a consideration of the question how long it is detained there and what is its ultimate goal. There are two views on this question, for which the support both of Holy Scripture and tradition are claimed. The one teaches that the holy souls and the saints are detained in the intermediate state till after the day of judgment; the other, that as each soul becomes perfected by the discipline it undergoes in that state, it passes into heaven and attains to the vision of God, which is the soul's supreme happiness, though at the last day, when re-united to the body, it receives an increment of beatitude and a special reward.

On behalf of the first view, that the holy souls and saints are alike detained in the intermediate state until after the day of judgment, it is urged that Christ associates the rewards of His kingdom with His second advent, and many passages of Holy

Scripture are quoted to sustain this position.[1] In all these passages references are made to a reward publicly bestowed by our Lord at His second coming. This reward is variously spoken of as receiving a crown of glory, being made like Christ, sitting upon thrones, and receiving a kingdom.

It may, however, be pointed out that *no one denies* that the triumphal crowning of the saints and the public bestowal of the rewards of the kingdom will take place after the day of judgment. This, however, does not at all prove that the saints are not admitted to heaven and to the vision of God so soon as, cleansed from all remains of sin, they are made perfect and therefore fit to see God. It is quite certain that the soul longs for God with a desire which grows more intense as every obstacle and imperfection is removed in the intermediate state; and we can with difficulty conceive of God delaying that happiness for which the soul yearns (and which we may well believe God desires to bestow) any longer than is necessary for the soul's good.

We should, therefore, contend that not one of the passages enumerated proves any more than that at the day of judgment there will be before the whole world a bestowal of the final rewards of the kingdom, when the saints having reassumed their bodies shall enter upon the bliss of eternity, and that this does not in the least militate against the view that

[1] S. Matt. xix. 27-28; xxv. 31, 34; Col. iii. 4; 2 Tim. iv. 8; 1 S. Peter v. 4; 1 S. John iii. 2.

when the disembodied soul is made perfect it enters heaven.

There are many passages which seem to support this latter view, and which can scarcely be explained apart from it. For instance, we read in the Epistle to the Philippians, "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things (beings) in heaven, and things (beings) in earth, and things (beings) under the earth."[1] This does not refer to some future state, but S. Paul asserts that at the present time beings in heaven as well as those in earth and those under the earth, that is, in the intermediate state, are praising Christ. We find almost the same words in S. John's vision in the Book of Revelation.[2]

Now, who are these "beings"? If some would confine them to angels it may be replied that in this chapter of Revelation the four living creatures and the four and twenty elders (who are generally taken to represent the Church) fall down before the Lamb, and sing a new song, saying, "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by the blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation."[3] It would seem, therefore, indisputable that S. John saw in heaven representatives of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation who had been redeemed by the blood of the

[1] Phil. ii. 9-10. [2] *Cf.* Rev. v. 3, 13. [3] Rev. v. 9.

Lamb. No possible stretch of language can make these words apply to the holy angels, since they are not redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, and they do not come from every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.

Furthermore, in another vision, S. John sees "A great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues [who] stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands," and of whom one of the elders said, "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple."[1] If it be objected that this may refer to the gathering of the saints after the day of judgment, the answer is simple. It takes place before the opening of the seventh seal, and therefore before the end of this world.

The advocates of the view that the saints do not enter heaven till after the day of judgment lay much stress upon our Lord's words to the penitent robber upon the Cross, "To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise." They tell us that Paradise is a Persian word representing the park or pleasure-ground around a palace, but that it is not the palace itself. So that it aptly signifies the intermediate state but cannot mean heaven. Let us see how far

[1] Rev. vii. 9, 14, 15.

this theory agrees with other passages of Holy Scripture.

The word Paradise is found in two other places. We are told by S. Paul "that he was caught up into Paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter," and that he was "caught up to the third heaven."[1] All commentators agree that these refer to the same place, that Paradise is the third heaven, and no one, so far as I am aware, has suggested that S. Paul was caught up into the intermediate state.

But the other passage is still more conclusive; for we read, in the Epistle to the Church of Ephesus, this message from heaven: "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God;"[2] and in the last chapter of Revelation, in which heaven is undoubtedly described, we find: "In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life."[3] In the Book of Revelation, therefore, we are told that the tree of life is in heaven, in the Paradise of God; so that Paradise, in this passage at least, undoubtedly means heaven.

Furthermore, we may point out that in our Lord's promise to the penitent thief, "To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise," the emphasis falls on the words "with Me." Paradise is "to be with Christ," for Paradise is where Christ is. During the three days before His Resurrection, Paradise was the

[1] 2 Cor. xii. 4, 2. [2] Rev. ii. 7. [3] Rev. xxii. 2.

intermediate state, but after our Lord ascended into heaven Paradise was where He was, in heaven.

At this point we must be very careful to observe that it is a matter of faith, an article of the Creed, that Christ in His glorified Humanity is locally and naturally only at the right hand of God the Father Almighty, as we say, "He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty." Our Lord's *Humanity* is not ubiquitous, that is, He is present locally no where else than in heaven. He is present in the Holy Communion not locally nor naturally but supra-locally and supernaturally, or, as we say, sacramentally. By virtue of His Divinity He is present everywhere, but having regard to the conditions of the human body He is present locally in only one place, heaven. He is not present, therefore, in the intermediate state excepting as God.

Now S. Paul in two passages expresses his belief that after death he will be with Christ. He says, "We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord;"[1] and "I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ."[2] What does S. Paul mean? that he will be with Christ in heaven or in the intermediate state? As we have pointed out, Christ is not present in the intermediate state, or indeed present *as Christ* anywhere except in heaven. Therefore these two passages seem

[1] 2 Cor. v. 8. [2] Phil. i. 23.

conclusively to prove that S. Paul believed that he would be with Christ in heaven.

This view is very fully discussed by one of the great Fathers of the Church, S. Gregory the Great, who says, "It is clearer than day that the souls of just men made perfect, after that they are delivered from their carnal prisons, are immediately received to their heavenly places. Which the very Truth Himself attests when He saith, 'Wheresoever the body is, there will the eagles be gathered together,' because where our Redeemer Himself is in Body, there without any doubt will the souls of the just be gathered together. Moreover, Paul desired to be dissolved and to be with Christ. Whoever then does not doubt that Christ is in heaven, neither let him deny that the soul of Paul is in heaven."[1]

Now, from other passages of his writings, S. Gregory shows that he believed in an intermediate state of purification, since he says, "For certain light sins we believe that there is a purgatorial fire before the judgment;"[2] and again, "I know that it will happen that after leaving this life some will expiate in purgatorial flames, others will undergo the sentence of damnation."[3] S. Gregory, therefore, believed that ordinary souls needed purification in the intermediate state but that the soul of a great saint and martyr like S. Paul went straight to

[1] S. Greg. Dialog. lib. iv. c. 25. [2] S. Greg. Dialog. lib. iv. cap. 39.
[3] S. Greg. Comment. on Psalm xxxvii. v. 1.

heaven; and this was the belief of the majority of the Fathers of the Church.

There is one other passage from the Revelation which is brought forward in support of the view that the saints are not in heaven. "I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: and they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled."[1]

The passage is one of great difficulty, and there is little agreement among commentators as to its meaning. The best view takes these souls as representing not Christians but Jews who were slain under the old covenant. They are under the altar, but the altar apparently is in heaven. They do not ask how long it will be before they enter heaven, but how long before their blood is avenged. And white robes are given unto them, similar to those worn by the saints in heaven,[2] and they are told they should rest for a little season, not until the day of judgment, but until their fellow-servants, who should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled. It is not at all certain that these souls

1 Rev. vi. 9-11. 2 *Cf.* Rev. vii. 9, 13.

are not in heaven, but it seems quite clear that they are not in the intermediate state; indeed Tertullian contrasts them with those who are in Hades, and speaks of them as in Paradise, but, as we have seen, Paradise is heaven.[1]

We may sum up the witness of Holy Scripture by saying that there is no passage which teaches that the saints remain in the intermediate state to the day of judgment, and many passages which imply that they are now in heaven.

As regards the Fathers of the Church, they are too numerous for us to quote in full. We must content ourselves with the assertion that there is no one Father of the Church who teaches that saints are not now in heaven, unless possibly it be Irenæus, and this is doubtful. There are many who positively assert that the saints are in heaven. For instance, S. Gregory of Nyssa says, "In the heavenly tabernacles where are the orders of angels, the choirs of the patriarchs,"[2] &c. S. Gregory Nazianzen says, "And now He is in heaven and there offering sacrifice for us."[3] S. Augustine declares that the saints are able "to see the very substance of God."[4] S. Chrysostom, in his sermon on S. Philogonius, says, "For he indeed has gone up into heaven." "Wherefore I deem this holy man supremely happy, for though he was translated and

[1] Tertullian, De Anima, cap. lv. [2] Orat. in S. Eph., v. fin. t. 3.
[3] Orat. 43 in Basil, ad. fin. (20, O.S.).
[4] De Gen. ad Litt. xii. 34, 67.

left our city, yet he ascendeth up to another, God's city, and when he left this Church he attained to that which is the Church of the first-born, who are enrolled in heaven, and having left our festivals here he has his share in the festival of the angels."

"Whoever saw in a festival assembly a king present? Here indeed no one ever saw this, but there those who are present see continually (so far as they are able to see) the king *both present and adorning with the splendour of His own glory all those who are assembled there.*"[1]

It seems almost impossible to find a stronger statement, and amongst those who affirm the Beatitude of the saints in heaven may be named SS. Ignatius, Dionysius the Areopagite, Justin Martyr, Athanasius, Basil, Gregory Nazianzen, Gregory Nyssen, Chrysostom, Cyril of Jerusalem, Cyril of Alexandria, Ephiphanius, Theodoret, Eusebius, John Damascene, Theophylact, Cyprian, Hilary, Ambrose, Prudentius, Jerome, Augustine, Leo, Fulgentius, Gregory the Great, Anselm, and Bernard. In some of the earlier of these Fathers, passages may be found which seem inconsistent with this, but other passages will be found affirming it clearly.

We may further notice that the doctrine that the saints are in heaven, and that each one, after being perfected in the intermediate state, attains to the vision of God, is the authoritative doctrine of the

[1] Cont. Anomœans, Hom. vi.

Holy Orthodox Eastern Church. The following is an extract from the orthodox confession of the Eastern Church: "By whichsoever of these three names that we have mentioned (Paradise, Abraham's bosom, or the Kingdom of Heaven), anyone shall call the receptacle of righteous souls he will not err provided that he believes and understands thus much, that they enjoy the favour of God and are in His heavenly kingdom and as the hymns of the Church mention in heaven."[1]

Macarius, Patriarch of Moscow, the principal Greek theologian of our day, in his treatise on the theology of the Orthodox Church, quotes this passage with the comment which we have added in a footnote.[2] In the Western Church it has been the authoritative teaching since the Council of Florence in 1439, while our own Prayer Book seems to set its seal to the same view, for in the prayer for the Visitation of the Sick we read, "O Almighty God, with Whom do live the spirits of just men made perfect, after they are delivered from their earthly prisons." The phrase "just men made perfect" evidently applies only to the saints who live, as it says, with God. And this doctrine is well expressed in Bishop Wordsworth's familiar hymn:

[1] Ques. 67.

[2] "La réalité de la glorification (imparfaite) des justes dans le ciel, aussitôt apres leur jugement particulier et avant le dernier jugement universel (*Conf. orth.*, p. 1, rép. 67), est un point hors de doute."—Macar. Tome ii., 642.

"Now they reign in heavenly glory,
Now they walk in golden light,
Now they drink, as from a river,
Holy bliss and infinite;
Love and peace they taste for ever,
And all truth and knowledge see
In the Beatific Vision
Of the Holy Trinity."

It would be impossible to have a stronger statement of the fact that the saints are *now* in heaven and in the enjoyment of the Beatific Vision, and yet this hymn finds a place in most of our hymnals.

We may conclude this chapter, which we have striven to make as little controversial as possible, by saying that the goal of the soul is heaven; that after being purified from the remains of sin and having made sufficient progress in sanctification, the soul passes from the intermediate state into the vision of God in heaven, though it receives a further increment of happiness and a special reward after the day of judgment, when it will be re-united to its body, and in the presence of the assembled saints and angels will be welcomed, and assigned to the place prepared for it by Almighty God.

CHAPTER XVI.

The Communion of Saints.

So far our investigations have been confined to the state of the souls of the faithful departed, their purification, progress in the intermediate state, and the goal to which they ultimately attain—heaven. Now we must consider the mutual relation and fellowship which exists between them and those who still dwell on this earth. In the Apostles' Creed we express our belief in the Communion of Saints ; but there is probably no article of the Creed which, for the majority of people, has so little meaning as this, and yet it is the article which sets forth our belief in the fellowship which exists between us and those who have preceded us within the veil.

The Apostles' Creed falls into three main divisions, which treat respectively of the work amongst men of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. The last of these begins with the words, "I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Holy Catholic Church, the Communion of Saints." These three clauses are most intimately related ; since the Holy Catholic Church

is the manifestation of the work of the Holy Ghost in this world, and the Holy Catholic Church is the Communion of Saints, for the saints are the fruits of the Holy Ghost, those who have yielded themselves up to His operations; and the intimate communion which exists amongst them is, as we shall see, rendered possible by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost in the Church and in the souls of individual Christians.

S. Paul describes the Church as the Body of Christ, a body consisting of head and members, all knit together in a most intimate union.[1] He takes as his illustration of this union the human body with its various organs and members, all working together for the common good, all depending upon one common life, and all so closely bound together that if one member suffers, all suffer with it, if one member has honour, all rejoice with it.[2]

While the Holy Catholic Church is one in all its essential characteristics, it is temporarily divided into three parts: the Church Militant, the Church Expectant, and the Church Triumphant; that is, the Church on earth, the Church of the intermediate state, and the Church in heaven. I say *temporarily divided*, though this division does not imply any interruption to the fellowship and interests which belong to the whole Body. There is still one common life inspiring all, whether on earth, in the intermediate state, or in heaven, and of this life the

[1] *Cf.* Eph. iv. 15-16; Col. ii. 19. [2] *Cf.* 1 Cor. xii. 12-27.

Holy Ghost is the Agent. For as the blood circulates in the human body, supplying every part and every member with nourishment and life, and any part which becomes strangulated or cut off from this circulation dies and ceases to be a part of the body; so the Holy Ghost, so to speak, circulates throughout the whole Church as the bond of union and the source of life, bringing into the most intimate fellowship every member of the Church Militant, Expectant, and Triumphant, and uniting all with their great Head, our Lord Jesus Christ.

If, by deliberate and grievous sin, any member of Christ's Body quenches the Holy Ghost, so that His life-giving power is no longer able to quicken that soul, it is cut off from the life of the Church, even though it may remain visibly in her union.

From this intimate union which exists in the Church there flows a common obligation, each striving to glorify God according to his own special vocation, and each interested in the work of every other member of the Church. This union, though vital, is not visible, since the members of the Church Militant cannot see the members of the Church Expectant and Triumphant, although they are, perhaps, more closely united to them than they are to other members of the Church Militant; for the life of this world is an obstacle to the most intimate union of souls, an obstacle which, as we have seen, is removed when we pass beyond the veil. Similarly, the souls in the intermediate state do not see those

on earth or in heaven. Many, however, have thought that the saints in heaven do see what is going on in the Church Militant, since the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews tells us that we are compassed about with a great cloud of witnesses,[1] and he is evidently referring to the saints.

The occupations of these three parts of the Church are diverse, though having one common end: the glory of God. The Church Militant is chiefly engaged in the training and development of souls for eternity. Here she carries on a struggle against temptation and sin, by which the spiritual powers of souls are developed either for good or for evil. While in a sense this struggle is the chief occupation of the Church Militant, she has even now her part in the great service of praise, which is one of the purposes for which man was created and the Church founded. This glorious service, in which all creation takes part, is perfectly rendered in heaven, but the souls in the intermediate state have their share in it, and the worship of the Church, especially the offering of the Holy Eucharist, is the means by which the Church Militant joins in the praises of heaven.

The Church in the intermediate state has no longer to struggle against sin, but it has its work of purification and progress through penitence and the development of spiritual faculties. It has, too, its fellowship with the Church on earth, and doubtless asks the intercessions of the saints in heaven.

[1] *Cf.* Heb. xii. 1.

The Church in heaven has entered upon the perfect service of praise, which is man's deepest expression of love, man's highest tribute to the Majesty of God. But it still has its interests in those who are struggling here on earth and in the holy souls in the intermediate state who are so soon to join its ranks. For both the Church Militant and Expectant the saints in heaven are praying, and for their perfection they wait, that the number of the elect may be made up and the glorious consummation of all things may be realised.

We should often meditate upon this article of the Creed, often strive to realise what the Communion of Saints implies. We must avoid that narrow and selfish view which thinks only of the interests of the Church in this world. We must recollect that the enormous majority of the members of the Church are in heaven. They, and those waiting in the intermediate state, are one with us; they care for us; for we are all knit together in one body, and inspired by the common life which we all live through the Holy Ghost.

CHAPTER XVII.

The Fellowship of Prayer.

In the last chapter we turned our attention to an article of the Creed, and discussed the *doctrinal* significance of the Communion of Saints. We must now consider the *practical* results which flow from it; for doctrine without practice is not only useless, but harmful; since to know the truth and not to act upon it only increases our condemnation; for ignorance has its plea, which our Lord recognises in His prayer, "Father, forgive them; *for they know not what they do*"; but knowledge has its responsibility, as He points out in the words. "If ye *know* these things, happy are ye if ye *do* them."[1]

The special practice which flows from a belief in the Communion of Saints is a fellowship of prayer on our part for the faithful departed; on theirs, for us. In speaking of the fellowship of *prayer* we include in this term all that we can mutually do to aid one another, and are not confining prayer to the mere utterance of set forms of words. That two

[1] S. John xiii. 17.

persons, who have loved one another and prayed for one another for many years, husband and wife, or mother and child, should at the death of the one cease to pray, is a view so cruel and unreasonable that it seems strange it should have obtained acceptance with any devout Christian. The bond of prayer is not severed by death any more than is the bond of love (which inspires the prayer) then broken. We continue to love those we have lost. We must continue to pray for them.

It is sometimes objected that so little is told us in revelation on the subject of prayer for the dead. But surely there are reasons which not only explain the comparative silence of Holy Scripture on this matter, but make this silence an endorsement of the practice. In the first place, prayer for the dead is included in the general duty of intercession, to which we are so often exhorted. We are to pray for one another. We are to pray for all men. S. Paul says, "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men,"[1] and "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints."[2] It is *difficult* to see why the faithful departed should be excluded from the injunction to pray "for *all men*," but it is quite *impossible* to see how they can be excluded from that which bids us pray with perseverance "for *all saints*"; since by

[1] 1 Tim. ii. 1. [2] Eph. vi. 18.

far the greater number of the saints have passed out of this world into the Church Expectant and Triumphant.

But this view is much strengthened by the fact that in our Lord's time prayer for the dead was the common practice among the Jews. We find in the Book of Maccabees the following passage:

"All men therefore praising the Lord, the righteous Judge, who had opened the things that were hid, betook themselves unto prayer, and besought Him that the sin committed might wholly be put out of remembrance. Besides, that noble Judas exhorted the people to keep themselves from sin, forsomuch as they saw before their eyes the things that came to pass for the sins of those that were slain. And when he had made a gathering throughout the company to the sum of two thousand drachms of silver, he sent it to Jerusalem to offer a sin offering, doing therein very well and honestly, in that he was mindful of the resurrection: for if he had not hoped that they that were slain should have risen again, it had been superfluous and vain to pray for the dead. And also in that he perceived that there was great favour laid up for those that died godly, it was an holy and good thought. Whereupon he made a reconciliation for the dead, that they might be delivered from sin."[1]

The date of the Books of the Maccabees is uncertain, but they cannot have been written until after

[1] 2 Mac. xii. 41-45.

160 B.C. So that we may say that there is evidence that, in the two centuries which preceded our Lord's birth, prayer for the dead was a recognised practice among the Jews. Jewish literature contains many examples of such prayers, and they are used by the Jews even in our own day. Whatever views we may hold in regard to the canonicity of the Books of Maccabees, and without attempting to prove any doctrine from an apocryphal book, no one can challenge its substantial historical accuracy; and it evidently bears witness to a practice existent for at least two hundred years before our Lord's time. We should therefore expect that our Lord and His apostles would warn their hearers that such prayers were wrong or useless, if such were the case, unless indeed they are included, as we believe they are, under the general duty of intercession for all men and for all saints.

We have, however, one instance of prayer for the dead in the New Testament: S. Paul's prayer for Onesiphorus, "The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus; for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain: but, when he was in Rome, he sought me out very diligently, and found me. The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day."[1] To this we may add the salutation at the end of the Epistle, "Salute Prisca and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus."[2]

[1] 2 Tim. i. 16-18. [2] 2 Tim. iv. 19.

The language used seems clearly to imply that Onesiphorus was dead.

1. S. Paul twice mentions the *household* of Onesiphorus, but not in connection with Onesiphorus. He prays, "The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus," and he sends a salutation to "the household of Onesiphorus." It is worth while observing that these two passages are the only places in which "house" and "household" are used in this sense. In our English translation we find the word in italics in S. Paul's salutations at the end of the Epistle to the Romans;[1] but, as of course every one knows, the italicised words in our translation are not in the original. So that S. Paul did not send his greetings to the household of Aristobulus or the household of Narcissus, but simply to the friends of these Christians. In the case of Onesiphorus, however, the greeting and the prayer are distinctly for the house of Onesiphorus. And this surely implies that Onesiphorus was no longer with them.

2. Then we must notice the *time* to which the prayer is directed, "That he may find mercy of the Lord in that day." "In that day" in S. Paul's phraseology means, we know, the day of judgment; but it is difficult to understand why S. Paul should pray for a man at that time living, that he may find mercy in the day of judgment.

3. Lastly, we may observe the form of the prayer, "That he may find mercy." There is no

[1] Rom. xvi. 10, 11.

other instance in the New Testament of a prayer that any one may find mercy. For people who are living the prayer is that they may obtain grace for their various needs, not that they may hereafter find mercy in the day of judgment.

We may, therefore, without hesitation, affirm that none but the most prejudiced can deny that we have here a prayer for the dead. And if it be asked why this is the only place, the answer seems to be that, as S. Paul's Epistles were written to the living, he naturally wrote of praying for *them*, and that the reference to a prayer for the dead would only be likely to appear in a passing passage, as in this case. It is very natural that in praying for the household of Onesiphorus, and sending his salutation to them, he should recognise the work Onesiphorus had once done for him, and that, Onesiphorus being dead, he should end with the prayer that God would have mercy on his soul.

If we turn to the testimony of the early Church we have unmistakable and overwhelming proof that prayer for the dead was recognised and practised. There are indeed three lines of evidence open to us: 1. The inscriptions in the catacombs. 2. Prayers in the ancient liturgies. 3. The writings of the Fathers.

1. The inscriptions in the catacombs date from the year A.D. 71 to 410. It is said that there are altogether about six thousand inscriptions, of which upwards of one hundred and ten are dated. From

this large number it is evident we can select but a very few as examples. "Hilaris, may you live happily with your friends, may you be refreshed in the peace of God." "Kalemeros, may God refresh thy spirit together with that of thy sister Hilara." "Timothea, mayest thou have eternal light in Christ." "Peace to thy soul, O Zosima." Here we have prayers respectively for peace, refreshment and light; and these are the three gifts for the faithful departed which we find prayed for in the liturgies.

2. The liturgies are far too numerous to quote. We can only say that there is scarcely any ancient liturgy which does not recognise prayers for the dead. The following are some specimens.

From the liturgy of S. James of Jerusalem: "Remember, O Lord God, the spirits of all flesh, of whom we have made mention, and of whom we have not made mention, who are of the true faith, from righteous Abel unto this day; do Thou Thyself give them rest there in the land of the living, in Thy kingdom, in the delight of Paradise, in the bosom of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, our holy fathers; whence pain and grief and lamentation have fled away: there the light of Thy countenance looks upon them, and gives them light for evermore."

In the Clementine liturgy we find this petition: "Let us pray for those who rest in faith."

In that of S. Cyril: "Be merciful, O Lord. Grant rest to our fathers and brothers, who have fallen asleep, and whose souls Thou hast received."

In S. Mark's: "Give rest, O Sovereign Lord, our God, to the souls of all those who are in the tabernacle of Thy saints, in Thy kingdom, graciously bestowing upon them the blessing of Thy promises."

In the Gallican liturgy we read: "At the same time we pray, beseeching Thee, O Lord, for the souls of Thy servants, our fathers . . . . and for the souls of our brothers, whom Thou didst deem worthy to call to Thyself from this place, and of strangers who died in the peace of the Church."

In the Ambrosian liturgy: "Remember also, O Lord, Thy servants, men and women, who have gone before us with the seal of the faith, and are sleeping in the sleep of peace. To them, O Lord, and all who rest in Christ, we pray Thee to grant a place of refreshment, light, and peace."

We find in the Syriac liturgy of S. James this prayer: "We commemorate all the faithful dead who have died in the true faith . . . . we pray Christ our Lord, who took their souls and spirits to Himself, that by His own manifold compassions He will make them worthy of the pardon of their faults and the remission of their sins."

In the Jacobite liturgy of S. John the Evangelist we read: "Of Thy mercy forgive their faults and failings, for none of those who have lived on earth can be found clean from the stains of sin."

3. Passing over the many similar passages in the liturgies we may draw attention to the words of some of the Fathers.

S. Augustine says, "It has come down to us from the Fathers, and is universally held in the Church, that we should pray for those who died in the Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ, when they are commemorated in their proper place, at the Sacrifice."

And again, praying for his mother, he says: "Setting aside for a while her good deeds, for which I gladly give Thee thanks, I do now entreat Thee for my mother's sins."

Tertullian says, "We offer the oblations for the dead on the anniversary of their birth."

S. Ambrose, speaking of Gratian and Valentinian, says, "Blessed are ye both, if my prayers shall be of any avail! No day shall pass by you in silence, no prayer of mine pass over you unhonoured, no night shall fly past you without your receiving the boon of some earnest prayer; I will attend to you with all my oblations."

Epiphanius argues that it is a traditionary custom of the Fathers, and therefore a duty of the Church. And S. Chrysostom asserts that the custom had received apostolic sanction, saying, "Not in vain was this law laid down by the apostles."

S. Jerome says: "I would have you observe, that although there is no hope of pardon for the ungodly after death, there are nevertheless some who may be absolved after death from the lighter sins in which they were entangled when they died."

We have said enough to show that there is no

possible doubt that the practice of prayers for the dead was recognised throughout the Church in its earliest and purest ages. It is quite true that this practice was fearfully abused in the Middle Ages, and that its abuse led to its suppression at the Reformation. But the abuse of a thing does not hinder its lawful use; and there is no sign of the least danger of its being misused in our own day.

If we inquire for what gifts we should pray, we may say chiefly for refreshment, light, and peace, the remission of sins of infirmity, and the removal of the remains of sins which were repented of and the guilt of which was forgiven in this life, but which were not completely eradicated by penitence; for such are the prayers which are used in the passages from the liturgies and of the Fathers which we have already quoted.

One of the best prayers for this purpose is the Introit from the liturgy, "Rest eternal grant to them, O Lord, and let light perpetual shine upon them." We may also use the *De Profundis*, Psalm cxxx., which formed part of the old English office of Vespers for the Dead. Its fitness for use in prayer for the departed is exemplified by showing how perfectly every part of the Psalm expresses the aspirations of the souls in the intermediate state.

"Out of the deep have I called unto Thee, O Lord"; literally "Out of the depths," for then

the soul is plunged into the depths of God's justice and mercy. It will understand the hatefulness of sin in God's eyes, and will desire with an intense yearning to have every stain of sin purged away, to satisfy the justice of God, and will therefore pray God to purify it absolutely, to spare it no suffering that may make it meet for His Presence for ever; for in the unseen world the soul will comprehend, as we cannot, the unfathomable riches of God's love and mercy, and so it will cry to God out of the depths of His justice and mercy.

"If Thou, Lord, wilt be extreme to mark what is done amiss: O Lord, who may abide it?" The faithful souls, in their clearer understanding of what is involved in the holiness of God, see how impossible it would be for any to be saved if God were extreme and strict to call to account for sin. His justice will demand a reckoning, but His mercy will pardon and restore the penitent, and the result will not be thankless forgetfulness of God's goodness, but holy fear on account of His mercy. "For there is mercy with Thee: therefore shalt Thou be feared."

"I look for the Lord; my soul doth wait for Him: in His word is my trust (hope)." The one occupation of the souls in the intermediate state is waiting for the Lord, waiting and hoping for that glorious moment when, freed from every trace of sin, they may enter His Presence, to spend eternity in drinking in the vision of His beauty and tasting the sweetness of His love.

"My soul fleeth unto the Lord: before the morning watch, I say, before the morning watch"; literally "My soul looketh for the Lord, more than watchmen for the morning." In these words we find an even stronger expression of the longing of the holy souls for the unveiled presence of God.

"O Israel, trust in the Lord, for with the Lord there is mercy: and with Him is plenteous redemption." Here the soul turns from its own needs, and out of the fulness of its own experience exhorts those still in the flesh to trust and hope in the Lord, since with Him is plenteous redemption.

The Psalm closes with the great promise: "And He shall redeem Israel: from all his sins." The holy souls *know* what we only *believe*, that God will redeem His whole Church from all its sins. For that blessed day we together with them wait and hope and pray. Meanwhile let us often think of those who have gone before us with the sign of faith, and who sleep in Christ, not only of those who are bound to us with the ties of love and kinship, but of all the holy dead. Let us often pray for them, saying this Psalm. Let us ask their prayers, that with them we may be made partakers of the heavenly kingdom.

The fellowship of prayer, however, implies not only our prayers for the faithful departed, but their prayers for us, the intercession of the saints. But little is told us on this subject in Holy Scripture; enough, however, to show us that the saints intercede

for us, for we read in Revelation that "the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having everyone of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of the saints";[1] and again, "And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand."[2] Here we find that in heaven the prayers of the saints are being offered by the four and twenty elders and by angels.

In the early Church the intercession of the saints was clearly recognised and sought, as the following inscriptions in the catacombs show: "Matronata Mateona . . . Pray for thy parents." "Anatolius . . . Pray for thy sister." "Vincentia in Christ. Pray for Phœbe and her husband." "Dionysius, an innocent child, now with the saints, remember us in your holy prayers." "Januaria, mayest thou be well refreshed, and pray for us."

We find also numerous references to the practice in the writings of the Fathers. Origen says: "I so deem that all those Fathers that fell asleep before us fight with us and help us by their prayers. For so also did I hear one of the older masters saying." And again: "Who doubts that all the Holy Fathers

[1] Rev. v. 8. [2] Rev. viii. 3-4.

help us by their prayers." And again: "It will not be wrong to say, that all the saints departed, retaining love for those who still are alive, take care, by their prayers and by their mediation with God, both of them and of their salvation."

S. Cyril of Jerusalem says: "We commemorate those who have fallen asleep before us, patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs, that God, by their prayers and intercessions, may receive our petition."

S. Gregory Nazianzen, speaking of his father, says: "I am persuaded that he now guards the flock more effectually by his intercession than he did formerly by his teaching, in proportion as he is now nearer to God." And, speaking of S. Basil, he says: "Now, indeed, he is in heaven, and there, as I think, is offering up sacrifices for us, and praying for the people; for, though he has left us, yet has he not utterly deserted us."

We find also passages in the writings of Eusebius, Theodoret and Sozomen, S. Anthony, S. Theodotus S. Ambrose, S. Cyprian, S. Jerome, S. Leo, S. Augustine, and many others.

We claim to inherit the doctrines and practice of primitive Christianity. The period in which the doctrines of the Church were defined was that of the four great Ecumenical Councils of Nicæa, Constantinople, Ephesus, and Chalcedon. They were all held between the years 325 and 451, in a period of little more than a century, during which we have abundant proof, as we have seen, of a faith in the

Communion of Saints and of the practice of prayer for the dead and invocation of the saints.

The loss of those we love ought to make the doctrine of the Communion of Saints intensely real and surely full of comfort; for it teaches us that though separated for a while in body, we are still united in spirit, and can pray for those who have gone before us, and ask their prayers and those of all the saints, that they may intercede for us and thus help us.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Eucharistic Intercession.

THE doctrine of the Communion of Saints, as we have seen, practically involves a fellowship of prayer, in which every member of the Body of Christ has part. There is, however, a special act through which the Communion of Saints becomes effective in the offering of the Church's great sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, of propitiation and prayer in the Holy Eucharist. And this we may regard, so far as the holy dead are concerned, from three points of view:

1. The Holy Eucharist is the great act of prayer in which all the Church joins. Prayer depends for its efficacy on the pleading of the merits of Jesus Christ, and it is in the Holy Eucharist that this pleading is most efficaciously set forth; for S. Paul says, "As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death, till He come."[1] In the Holy Eucharist there is not a repetition of the Sacrifice of Calvary, for "Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over Him."[2] But there is in the Holy

[1] 1 Cor. xi. 26. [2] Rom. vi. 9.

Eucharist an act identical with the Sacrifice of Calvary, a mystical immolation of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. For, by the separate consecration of the bread into His Body, and the wine into His Blood, Jesus Christ is really offered to His Father inasmuch as His Body and His Blood are placed before Him, actually clothed with the signs representing His death, for the Body and the Blood are thus separated as by death.

In the worship of heaven, while there is no sacrificial act corresponding to the consecration in the Holy Eucharist, that worship is sacrificial in that it points back to our Lord's death upon the Cross as its most prominent feature; for S. John tells us, "I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb *as it had been slain*,"[1] and the four beasts and four and twenty elders sang a new song, saying, "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: *for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood;*"[2] and again, "Worthy is the Lamb *that was slain* to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing."[3] And yet again we read of those "whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb *slain* from the foundation of the world."[4]

The worship of heaven, therefore, is essentially and characteristically the worship of "the Lamb as

[1] Rev. v. 6. [2] Rev. v. 9. [3] Rev. v. 12.
[4] Rev. xiii. 8; *Cf.* xvii. 8.

it had been slain," that is, of Christ as the Sacrifice for the sins of the world. As we have said, there is no sacrificial action in heaven, yet some of the Fathers speak of the offering of a sacrifice, by which doubtless they mean a pleading of it; for S. Gregory Nazianzen, in his funeral oration on S. Basil, says, "He now abides in heaven, and there, as I think, offers sacrifice in our behalf."

The Holy Eucharist, then, is the great act of intercession for the faithful departed; and from this it follows that the most prevailing prayer is the offering of the Holy Sacrifice on their behalf. So that we should frequently plead the Eucharist for them, and, if we are able, we should make arrangements that a priest shall offer it for them, especially on the anniversaries of their death and at other times. Such Celebrations are generally called "Requiems," from the first word of the Introit used on such occasions: "Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine: et lux perpetua luceat eis"—"Rest eternal grant to them, O Lord: and let light perpetual shine upon them."

2. The Eucharist is not only a sacrifice but a Communion; that is, a feast upon a sacrifice. Our Lord, in His great discourse recorded by S. John, tells us that He is the bread of heaven and that He is the bread of life.[1] Christ is our spiritual food and sustenance, sacramentally given to us in the Holy Communion. But while He feeds us there with the

[1] *Cf.* S. John vi. 32-35.

same Body which was born of the Blessed Virgin, and crucified upon the Cross, it is no longer in the same condition, since it is not a material body but the glorified spiritual Body which now reigns in heaven, and with which He feeds the spiritual part of our nature.

Spiritual bodies after the resurrection will no longer need food to supply the waste of their tissue as we need it on earth; for we are told that in heaven "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall *feed* them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters."[1]

We must observe that the word in this passage translated "feed" is really "shepherd." Christ shall be there the Shepherd of the saints as He was on earth the Good Shepherd; and this includes the idea of ruling as well as leading to pasture. But the clause He "shall lead them unto living fountains of waters," literally "fountains of waters of life," implies something in the nature of refreshment even in heaven. In the Church on earth, in the Eucharist, Christ is the Bread of Life. In heaven He will lead His saints to fountains of waters of life. In both He is their spiritual sustenance.

3. There is one other point to be noticed in connection with the faithful departed: that at the moment when we make our communions we are

[1] Rev. vii. 16-17.

brought into *union* with the whole Body of Christ, and realise most perfectly in act the Communion of Saints; for we communicate then with Christ the Head, and with each member of His Body: therefore we communicate then with those whom we love in the world beyond.

Eucharistic intercession for the faithful departed, whether in the form of special prayers for them at a celebration of the Holy Communion at which we are present, or, even better, in the offering of a Requiem Celebration on their behalf at appointed times, will always be the chief way in which we shall practically realise the Communion of Saints as applied to those whom we have lost for a while, but whom we still love in the world beyond.

CHAPTER XIX.

Almsgiving.

Is there anything else that we can do for those we love among the faithful departed? Most certainly there is. We can give alms and do works of mercy on their behalf, for this is precisely what we find Judas Maccabeus did for those slain in battle. "Besides, that noble Judas exhorted the people to keep themselves from sin, forsomuch as they saw before their eyes the things that came to pass for the sins of those that were slain. And when he had made a gathering throughout the company to the sum of two thousand drachms of silver, he sent it to Jerusalem to offer a sin offering, doing therein very well and honestly, in that he was mindful of the resurrection: for if he had not hoped that they that were slain should have risen again, it had been superfluous and vain to pray for the dead. And also in that he perceived that there was great favour laid up for those that died godly, it was an holy and good thought. Whereupon he made a reconciliation for the dead, that they might be delivered from sin."[1] In this passage we find that

[1] 2 Mac. xii. 42-45.

almsgiving is associated with prayer. Judas sends the large sum of two thousand drachms of silver to Jerusalem as an offering, and prays for the dead.

If we realise that we are members of the one Body of Christ, and can help one another by prayer, surely we can also help one another by almsgiving. How efficacious almsgiving is we may gather from our Lord's inculcation of it as *first* among the three "Notable Duties"; for in the Sermon on the Mount He begins a section with the duty of almsgiving, followed afterwards by that of prayer and fasting.[1] We read, too, of the power of almsgiving in the case of the Gentile centurion Cornelius, to whom the angel announced that his "prayers and alms" had come up for a memorial before God.[2]

As regards the faithful departed we may divide alms-deeds into two classes, both of which should be, if possible, performed. We may give alms from time to time to various works of charity on behalf of the holy dead. A member of my parish, whose wife died many years ago, for twelve years, until he died, sent me a large cheque on the anniversary of her death, which represented the sum she used to give in charities during the year, and pinned to it was a slip of paper with the simple inscription, "In her memory."

The alms of Cornelius came up for "a memorial before God." Which is best, a memorial before men or a memorial before God? Which is most

[1] S. Matt. vi. 1-16. [2] *Cf.* Acts x. 4.

efficacious to the soul of the departed, and which is most helpful to the soul of the donor? Which is most pleasing to God? I think no one can hesitate about the answer.

Sometimes the memorial may be both before God and man, as when it takes the form of beautifying a church or of providing for some permanent work of charity. A form of memorial which has always especially appealed to me is an endowment for a choir fund. There is something very beautiful in the thought of providing for the perpetual singing of God's praises long after we have passed away. Or again, there is the building of a mission chapel for the poor, a work for winning souls to Christ. A memorial, however, which does not appeal to me is the endowment of an institution for purely secular purposes. It is very fitting that people who have no faith in the Communion of Saints should build colleges or other institutions for secular work, to keep their name before men; but surely those who have faith and hope in the resurrection of the dead would prefer a memorial before God, which also bears witness in the sight of men to their faith and hope in the Communion of Saints.

CHAPTER XX.

The Resurrection of the Body.

At the second advent, at the coming of Christ's kingdom of glory, we shall all rise with our bodies to be judged, and then shall enter for ever upon a condition of happiness or misery. The bodies of the redeemed, how glorious they will be! and when reunited to the soul they will add to its happiness. Here on earth they often dragged down and fettered the soul in its progress, and were instruments of temptation to it; but in heaven they will be its most obedient and faithful servants.

Naturally we ask of what sort will be our resurrection bodies. First we may assert that they will be identical with the bodies we have on earth, not because composed of the same material particles, for, so far as we know, we shall not need a material body in that spiritual world; but identical because we can have but one body, and because the material particles which enter into our earthly bodies are not an essential part of them.

Even in this life the body is in a state of continual change. The material tissue is wasting daily,

and daily is being renewed by food assimilated to the body through the processes of digestion. So that we perceive that here our real body is not the material elements which possess weight and chemical properties, but something which has the power of gathering and assimilating these material particles for the purposes of the body's life in this world. In heaven our bodies will be spiritual and glorified bodies, no longer dependent upon the functions of animal life. They will no longer need to eat and drink and sleep, and they will probably manifest themselves by such substances as are purely spiritual.

Our only means of obtaining any clear knowledge concerning the qualities of the resurrection body is the study of the manifestations of Christ's risen Body, and of the statements contained in S. Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians, in the passage in which he is treating of this subject. S. Paul there tells us of the body that "It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural (psychical) body; it is raised a spiritual body."[1]

It will be best to begin by examining the statement of S. Paul, and then we can see how this is borne out by what we know of the manifestations of our Lord's risen Body. S. Paul tells us that the endowments of the risen and glorified body are four:

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 42-44.

Impassibility, Subtlety, Agility, and Clarity or Brightness.

1. Impassibility implies freedom not only from death, but from all pain and suffering. And this property of the risen body follows from S. Paul's words: "It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption." Theologians hold that this impassibility arises from the perfect subjection of the body to the rational soul, by virtue of which the soul communicates its own impassibility to the body. Christ's risen Body, we know was impassible; His enemies could no longer injure it. And in heaven we are told that there will be no more pain, no more suffering.

2. Subtlety is that quality by which the bodies of the glorified saints are able to penetrate other bodies without injury either to themselves or to those bodies through which they pass. This attribute does not arise from absence of dimension or extension in the glorified body, but rather from the fact that these properties are so suspended that it is able to penetrate other bodies. It is quite clear that our Lord's risen Body possessed this quality of subtlety, for we know that He rose through the stone of the tomb, which was afterwards rolled away, and that He appeared in the upper chamber at Jerusalem on Easter Day, when the doors were shut for fear of the Jews.

This attribute of the risen body is implied in S. Paul's words: "It is sown a natural body; it is

raised a spiritual body." These words require some explanation. The word "natural," as we have before pointed out, is a translation of a Greek word equivalent to our "psychical." So that S. Paul states that the body in this life is a psychical body, that is, under the dominion of the animal soul, but that it shall be raised a spiritual body, or under the dominion (not of the animal soul) but of the higher rational soul or spirit. This property of subtlety is the result of the dominion of the glorified soul, which "informs" the body; so that the glorified body is called spiritual, because it is altogether subject to the spirit.

3. Agility is that endowment by which the risen body is able to transfer itself from place to place with the swiftness of thought, at the will of the soul. This property S. Paul sets forth when he says, "It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power." Theologians point out that the soul is not only joined to the body as its *form*, but as its *motor*, and in both cases it befits the glorified body to be entirely subject to the glorified soul, so that it may be apt and obedient to all the motions and actions of the soul. It is evident that our Lord's risen Body possessed this quality, since He appeared to different people at Jerusalem and in Galilee, and disappeared. We cannot conceive of His having to pass from place to place by the ordinary methods of locomotion. Indeed, we are told of His Body *vanishing*.[1]

[1] *Cf.* S. Luke xxiv. 31.

4. The last endowment of the risen body is Clarity or Brightness, by which we mean that the bodies of the just shall shine with the glory and beauty of heaven, of which the apostles had a glimpse when our Lord was transfigured; for then we read that "His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light."[1] To this property of the risen body S. Paul refers in the words: "It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory." And our Lord expressly foretells it in the parable of the tares, when He says, "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father."[2] It has been thought that this brightness will be caused by the overflow of the glory of the soul upon the body, or by the shining of the soul through the body. That our Lord's risen Body possessed this attribute we have already pointed out, for at the Transfiguration His three chosen apostles were permitted for a moment to see this glory, in order to encourage them in the sufferings through which they were about to pass.

This is all that revelation teaches us about the resurrection body, but as nothing imperfect can enter heaven, we may believe that we shall rise with perfect and entire bodies, that they will be free from the effects of disease, and that no part will be wanting. Further, it is commonly taught that the bodies of the Blessed, whether they were young or old when

[1] S. Matt. xvii. 2. [2] S. Matt. xiii. 43.

they died, in the resurrection will be of perfect development as in the prime of life.

The Creed teaches us to profess our faith not only in the resurrection of the body, but in the life of the world to come, the life everlasting. We have treated of the endowments of the glorified body, of what nature will be the glory of the souls of just men made perfect? The joys of heaven! Who can describe them or even conceive of them! For S. Paul has told us that "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him."[1] But while we cannot hope to describe the good things which the Blessed enjoy in the Beatific Vision, there is much that we may gather both from revelation and from reason which will help us to form some faint idea of the happiness of the soul in heaven. Its joys fall into two classes, positive and negative. Let us examine them.

1. Of the positive joys in heaven we may notice that here on earth the soul has three great passions: the desire to know, to love, and to possess and be possessed by the object of its love. These three desires are absolutely satisfied in heaven through the enjoyment of the Beatific Vision.

i. First, it will satisfy our craving to know God; for we read in the Epistle to the Corinthians, "Now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know

[1] 1 Cor. ii. 9.

even as also I am known."[1] In the last clause the verb "know," which occurs twice, should be translated "fully know." In other words, we *now* experience the passion of curiosity; *then* our desire for knowledge will be fully satisfied, for in the Beatific Vision we shall have a distinct and intuitive knowledge of God as He is in Himself.

This knowledge will be distinct or clear, as differing from that which is acquired either by reason or by faith, since such knowledge always has a certain obscurity; as S. Paul says, "Here we see in a mirror obscurely." It is intuitive or immediate, in the sense that God is seen in Himself directly, and not through the medium of creatures. And thus the Beatific Vision is distinguished from abstract or deductive knowledge; for in these God is apprehended by effects, whilst in the Beatific Vision we see God directly and in Himself, as really present to the intellect.

We are not able to see God in the Beatific Vision *comprehensively*, since a finite intellect cannot perfectly *comprehend* God, Who is infinite. We, however, see there not only God's attributes but His very Essence, God Himself, the Ever-Blessed Trinity.

The created intellect, in its own natural strength, cannot see the Beatific Vision, for there is no proportion between the Divine nature and the highest created intelligence. But there will be a transformation or elevation of the natural powers of the soul to

[1] 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

enable it to apprehend the Beatific Vision. For as the natural eye requires two things to enable it to see—the presence of an object and light in order that the image of the object may be received—so the intellect, in order to see God, requires not only the proximity of the Divine Essence, but also an interior gift by which it is elevated to an act above its natural powers.

This quality in the intellect of the saints, theologians call the "light of glory," a term frequently used in the Fathers, and formally adopted by the Council of Vienne.

While the saints in heaven all intuitively behold God face to face, they do not all *apprehend* Him in an equal degree, but according to the capacity of each soul, which depends partly upon the talents God bestowed upon it in creating it, but still more upon the fidelity with which those talents have been developed.

This inequality, however, will be no cause of envy among the Blessed ones, since each one will enjoy the Beatific Vision to his full capacity, and this for him will leave nothing more to be desired.

ii. The soul not only has a desire to know but a passion to love. And from the intuitive knowledge of God in the Beatific Vision flows a perfect and beatified love, so that the saints love God fully and perfectly. The *will* then is infallibly attracted to the highest Good. In this Vision the intellect recognises God as the highest Good, and the will

reaches out to God with most burning and perfect love. As the light of glory is bestowed upon the saints in heaven, to perfect the intellect and to enable it to know God absolutely, so in the Blessed the will is strengthened by the habit of charity, which enables it to love God perfectly as the supreme Good.

iii. The result of this love may be regarded as twofold; ecstasy and union with God.

Ecstasy is a state in which a man, so to speak, passes out of himself into the possession of the object of his love. Thus the saints are so drawn to God in thought and affection that all thoughts and motions of self-love become entirely extinguished in them, and they are, as it were, dead to self, and live only to God, seeking nothing but His glory; as S. Paul says, "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."[1]

The other effect of beatific love is perfect union with God. By this union the Blessed ones are joined so closely to God through the sublime and perpetual contemplation of the Divine Essence (since they always behold the Face of God), and by continual imitation of the Divine character, and perfect conformity with the Divine will, that they are in a sense transformed into God. They seem to be absorbed or immersed in the abyss of Divinity, and yet without any loss of individuality, for they always remain distinct from God.

[1] Gal. ii. 20.

We must keep this point clearly before us, that we shall not be merely swallowed up in one great ocean of goodness, in which all personality will be lost, but that we shall each drink in the joys of that Vision, and shall be *individually* satisfied with it.

S. John describes the souls of the just as precious stones in the foundations of the walls of the new Jerusalem, and proceeds to enumerate some of those stones.[1] They are not all the same stones, but each has its own individual colour, each its own special beauty. So will it be with the saints in heaven. There will be no monotony there, for no two saints will be quite alike. Each will have his own special character, and that character will be largely the result of the discipline of earth.

2. We have pointed out that the joys of heaven are of two sorts: positive and negative. We have considered the first. We must now turn our attention to the negative joys of heaven.

These are especially described in the Book of Revelation, where we read that "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."[2] All the sorrows and heart-aches of earth will not only be gone for ever, but the tears will be wiped away by God's tender Hand, and His consolations will flow into the soul. The doubts and fears whether we should persevere are then set at rest.

[1] *Cf.* Rev. xxi. 18-21. [2] Rev. xxi. 4.

The glorified body, which is impassible, can never more know pain or disease. All that spoiled our life on earth will be blotted out, and in its place will be an unending experience of joy. Best of all, there will be no more change. Here, as the drop of poison in life's greatest happiness, was the fear that it would not last; for everything on earth changes. There, there will be no more change, for heaven is eternal. We shall be with God and with those we love. We shall enjoy the companionship of the holy angels and the saints.

Is it not then worth while to bear for a few years the sorrows of earth? Still more, is it not worth while to use them rightly as a means of preparing ourselves for the joys of heaven? As we reflect on these things does it not help us to understand our Lord's words, "Blessed (happy) are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted"?

LAUS DEO.

JARROLD & SONS, LTD.,
PRINTERS,
THE EMPIRE PRESS, NORWICH

152230 243.6
Mortimer, Alfred G. M844

Sorrow, hope and prayer.

243.6
152230 M844

St. Marks Library
General Theological Seminary
175 Ninth Avenue
New York 11, N. Y.

Please stamp date in left column, write your name legibly in center column and leave right column blank. Deposit circulation card in slot marked 'Circulation cards'.

There is no date due, but books must be returned promptly upon request. Do not lend books charged to you to others.
You are responsible for them.